The African Communist

NO 74 THIRD QUARTER 1978

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Distributors of *The African Communist*

PRICE AND SUBSCRIPTION

AFRICA	*10p per copy* *40p per year post free* *Airmail £5.00 per year* (Readers in Nigeria can subscribe by sending 1 Naira to New Horizon Publications, 14 Tamakloe St. Mushin, Lagos. Or to KPS Bookshop, PMB 1023, Afikpo.)
BRITAIN	*25p per copy* *£1.00 per year post free*
ALL OTHER COUNTRIES	*$1.00 per copy* *$4.00 per year post free* *Airmail $10.00 per year. US currency*

INKULULEKO PUBLICATIONS, 39 Goodge Street, London W.1.

THE AFRICAN COMMUNIST

Published quarterly in the interests of African solidarity, and as a forum for Marxist-Leninist thought throughout our Continent, by the South African Communist Party

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MOSES KOTANE

(August 9, 1905 — May 19, 1978)

The General Secretary of the South African Communist Party and a member of the national executive of the African National Congress, died in Moscow on May 19 in his 73rd year.

For 50 years he was in the front rank of those tens of thousands of our people who fought for the liberation of their country from the racist tyranny of the white supremacists and imperialists.

Communist, staunch nationalist and internationalist, he blazed the trail to freedom, devoting all his enormous energy and talent to the cause of his people. He lived and died for a socialist South Africa, free from racism, exploitation and the threat of war.

We who have been left behind pledge to continue his work until the dream which inspired his efforts becomes a reality: a free South Africa in a free Africa.

Amandla Ngawethu! Maatla ke Arona!

— The Editorial Board

(An obituary of Moses Kotane will be published in our next issue.)

EDITORIAL NOTES

THE PLOT THICKENS IN SOUTHERN AFRICA

The grand design of the imperialists and racists for a Southern African settlement is gradually becoming clearer. In Zimbabwe the so-called "internal settlement" concocted by Smith is being presented as an acceptance of the principle of majority rule based on one man one vote. In Namibia Vorster's acceptance of the plan outlined by the five Western negotiators — the US, Britain, France, West Germany and Canada — has been hailed as a victory for reason and peace. Immense pressure is being brought to bear to force the Patriotic Front and SWAPO respectively to come to terms.

In both countries it is apparent that what the racists have agreed to falls short of majority rule and will in practice leave the reality of white power unchanged. As long ago as September 1977, the Patriotic Front, in response to the Anglo-American proposals, stated: "The Problem in Zimbabwe is not the election of a President but: 1. The destruction of colonialism and its institutions; 2. The attainment of genuine independence; and 3. The democratisation not only of the vote but of all institutions and the way of life in Zimbabwe."

The internal settlement in Zimbabwe does not even meet the standards set by the Anglo-American plan. With 28 per cent of the seats in Parliament reserved for three per cent of the population, this is not "one man one vote" but "one white man ten black votes". For at least 10 years the white majority will be able to block any measures which do not suit them, and to guarantee their supremacy they will retain control of the army, the police force, the administration and all the other essential levers of power. There is nothing in the agreement calling for a redistribution of land or wealth or the elimination of inequality which pervades every aspect of life in Rhodesia. The sacking of the Justice Co-minister Byron Hove for mildly advocating Africanisation in the police force and the judiciary indicates that the white racists are in no way prepared to transfer real power to the black majority.

In Namibia Vorster proclaimed on the eve of the UN General Assembly debate on the future of the territory that he was prepared to accept the plan of the Western "gang of five". But just what was he accepting? He was insisting that South African forces remain in the territory until requested to get out by the constituent assembly set up after the proposed "one man one vote" elections; that the South African-appointed Administrator General would remain head of the administrative structure; that not a single South African soldier would be withdrawn from the territory until SWAPO had ceased "hostilities"; that the existing police force would be responsible for the maintenance of "law and order"; that Walvis Bay remain under South African control.

In other words, all that Vorster was prepared to contemplate was the holding of elections. But at the very moment that he was announcing this "concession", emergency law was clamped down on the territory, and a ferocious campaign was launched against SWAPO resulting in the killing of a number of SWAPO members and supporters, the stirring up of tribal antagonism, and the detention without trial of most of SWAPO's internal leadership. No election held under these conditions could be regarded as a free and fair test of public opinion. Yet when SWAPO demurred, it was branded as "intransigent" and Andrew Young, the US Ambassador to the UN said: "I think we have no choice, with South Africa having accepted and SWAPO not, to keep the pressure on SWAPO". He added that in his opinion "it was very good and very smart of the South African Government to accept the Western plan for South West African independence. It's one of the smartest things they've done in a long time. For the first time, it puts them on the right of an issue".

It is to be hoped that these remarks will dispel once and for all the notion that Andrew Young as a black American is somehow different from the US establishment and always on the side of the angels. While he was preparing to "put the pressure on SWAPO", the UN General Assembly was making it plain once again that South Africa has no right to be in Namibia at all, and certainly no right to lay down any conditions about what is to happen there. A motion calling on South Africa to withdraw from the territory forthwith was passed by 119 votes to nil, though most of the Western countries as usual abstained. Why did not Young endorse this vote and put the pressure on Vorster instead of on SWAPO?

Just one day after the UN vote was taken, South Africa staged a provocative Israeli-style invasion of Angola, underlining her confidence that she can rely on western backing in the field no matter what is decided at the United Nations.

It is quite intolerable that the Patriotic Front and SWAPO should be put on the spot for attempting to implement what the UN has proclaimed in its resolutions. That the liberation movements in Southern Africa have had to resort to armed struggle in support of their demands is entirely the responsibility of the racists and imperialists who have between them effectively sabotaged the UN resolutions and flouted international opinion. And this is true not only in relation to Zimbabwe and Namibia but also and most particularly in relation to South Africa itself. Young and Owen may have plans for Namibia and Zimbabwe, but they have none for South Africa, the main bastion of imperialism and racism in the whole subcontinent. Everything that has happened in Africa in recent months confirms the opinion we have expressed consistently that the Western initiative in Africa is designed, not to undermine, but to strengthen the position of South Africa and establish effective buffers against the spread of the African revolution.

But the day when the imperialists and racists could determine the fate of Africa is over. Today the liberation movements are on the offensive, and enjoy the support of the vast majority of the peoples of the world expressed not merely by the passage of resolutions at international meetings but also in the form of practical assistance. Most heartening in this context was the Soviet-Cuban communique issued after the visit to Moscow in April of the Cuban Foreign Minister Isidoro Malmierca Peoli, who had talks with Leonid Brezhnev. In the section devoted to Africa, the communique denounced the policies of apartheid and racial discrimination practised by the South African and Rhodesian regimes, and pledged all support to the Patriotic Front, SWAPO and the African National Congress in their fight for freedom.

A statement issued by the national chairman of the South African Communist Party, Dr Y. M. Dadoo, said the communique would be received with widespread enthusiasm and gratitude by the oppressed peoples throughout Southern Africa. Dr. Dadoo added:

"The people's struggle against colonialism and apartheid under the leadership of their vanguard organisations is rising to ever new heights. Throughout Southern Africa the imperialists and racists are on the retreat. At a time when the western powers are coming forward with plans for 'internal settlements' in a desperate bid to snatch victory from the grasp of the freedom fighters and stabilise the racist regimes, it is a source of great encouragement to us to know that we can rely in future, as we have done in the past, on the unwavering material and moral support of the socialist countries and all contingents of the international communist movement.

"The Soviet Union and Cuba in particular have demonstrated in Angola and Ethiopia the invaluable contribution they can make to the revolutionary process in Africa. In doing so they have acted in accordance with the highest principles of Marxism-Leninism and proletarian internationalism and have forged indestructible bonds between the socialist countries and the National Liberation movements in Africa.

"We unreservedly endorse the condemnation voiced in the Soviet-Cuban communique of the actions of the Chinese leadership in lending their support to the imperialists and racists in their reactionary campaigns in Africa and Latin America. The damage which has been done to our cause and to the cause of peace throughout the world by this unholy alliance is something which our suffering people cannot overlook.

"In expressing our appreciation of the action of the Soviet Union and Cuba in once again pledging all support for our movements, we in turn pledge to intensify our liberation struggle until by our joint efforts we have liquidated entirely the remnants of racism and colonialism in the African continent.

"Together let us march forward to victory. Long live Soviet-Cuban cooperation with Africa! Long live proletarian internationalism! Long live the fight for socialism and world peace!"

THE TRANSKEI CIRCUS

The Matanzima "government's" breach of diplomatic relations with South Africa which came into effect on April 30 was a desperate attempt to rescue the fortunes of his tottering regime. Ostensibly it was a protest against the passage through the South African Parliament of a bill transferring East Griqualand from the Cape Province to Natal. Since Matanzima had long laid claim to East Griqualand as part of the Transkei, he chose to regard this as an insufferable insult, though the issue was outstanding at the time of "independence" in 1976 and had not prevented him from accepting "independence" on the terms laid down by Vorster.

Another cause of conflict between the two "countries" has been the treatment of Transkei citizens in South Africa. Far from receiving the special privileges promised by Vorster, Transkei citizens in South Africa continued to be treated as rightless migratory labourers, denied even the protection of the notorious Section 10 of the Urban

Areas Act because Matanzima had taken away from them their right to South African citizenship. Prior to "independence" Matanzima had maintained that he would not agree to loss of South African citizenship as the price for "independence", and he even claimed the Transkei Constitution Act left Transkeians with the choice. The Act, however, was quite specific. Had Matanzima meant business, he could have amended the Act or at least spoken against it when it was passed through the Transkei National Assembly after "independence", but it went through without amendment or even debate. The subservient position of the Transkei was further exposed by the clutch of "treaties" between the two "governments" signed before "independence" and analysed by Phineas Malinga in *The African Communist,* Issue No. 69, Second Quarter, 1977. Once again, had Matanzima meant business he could have repudiated these treaties, but found himself in the position of the puppet who cannot exist outside the control of his manipulator. Matanzima came to power and retains power by the grace of the Vorster regime. Take away the strings and the puppet will collapse.

Nevertheless, the Transkei and the Transkeian people are not to be equated with Matanzima, and it is precisely because opposition to his regime and that of South Africa is growing amongst the people of the Transkei, as everywhere in South Africa, that Matanzima has had to change his stance. For both the Matanzima and Vorster regimes the Transkei experiment has been an expensive failure. As the South African Secretary for Information, Dr Eschel Rhoodie, admitted in evidence to the select committee on public accounts: "If other governments in Africa, Europe and the Americas do not recognise the state of Transkei, there will indeed have been hundreds of millions of rands spent in vain". To date, nobody has recognised the Transkei, and now even South Africa has been forced to remove its ambassador — though the foreign ministers of the two "countries" met before April 30 to make sure that relations were maintained despite the well-publicised breach. The plain fact is that the Transkei is still an inseparable part of South Africa. The Transkei "government" still gets the bulk of its revenue from South Africa, and Matanzima cannot afford to bite the hand that feeds him.

But the mass of the people of the Transkei, some of whom may have been misled by the false promises held out to them before "independence", now see plainly that there is nothing in it for them. Hundreds of thousands of them are still forced by poverty to seek work at starvation wages on South Africa's mines and farms. They are still under the control of white South Africans, hundreds of whom hold key jobs in the administration. There is still no work and no land for the Transkeian people in their own "country". While Matanzima and his clique make themselves comfortable at the top, the people are burdened with a huge weight of fresh taxation. As the rumble of popular discontent rose to a roar, the ruling Transkei National Independence Party began to be hit by defections, mostly from East Pondoland, and a new opposition party was formed under the leadership of Mr. C. S. Mda.

Ever the demagogue, Matanzima has tried to steal the thunder of his opponents in his desperate bid to survive. Even before his breach of diplomatic relations with South Africa, he announced at the congress of the TNIP in Umtata last March that he planned to hold a conference of "the oppressed" this year, and "government" sources were quoted as saying it was "highly likely" that groups like the ANC, PAC, Black People's Convention and others would be invited to attend. He even indicated he was willing to come to an understanding with Buthelezi, and he went on:

"With Bophuthatswana on our side and other independent states in Southern Africa we shall force white South Africa to come to the normal senses of a respectable community. Their arrogance and selfishness and self-imposed superiority complex should be crushed and they should be made to understand that South Africa belongs to all races that occupy it".

Is that last phrase familiar? It comes straight out of the Freedom Charter, which Matanzima renounced when he opted for "independence" within Vorster's Bantustan empire. And in his speech announcing the rupture of relations with South Africa, Matanzima said: "I will from now on demand majority rule in South Africa, my country".

Strictly speaking, it was a treasonable offence for Matanzima to make that statement, since in terms of his security legislation (largely based on South Africa's Internal Security Act) it is a crime punishable by death to call for the reunification of the Transkei with South Africa. And in practice he has done nothing to promote the demand for majority rule in a united South Africa. He has not lifted the bans on the ANC, PAC or BPC. And he has not stopped denouncing the Communist Party and the socialist countries and emphasising his devotion to "free enterprise" and "the democratic principles of the west".

Perhaps it is not worth while spending time examining Matanzima's credentials as a freedom fighter since his claim to be one is not to be taken seriously. But it should be noted that at a time of crisis in his administration, when he is desperate to win support from the people of the Transkei, he tries to take over the programme of the liberation movement, endorses the policies associated with the African National Congress and denounces those of the apartheid regime. Clearly this is what the people want and Matanzima is forced to give it to them, even if only in words.

Significantly enough, at about the same time Buthelezi, in a long interview with the *Rand Daily Mail* (April 26, 1978), defended his role in South African politics by claiming to be the natural heir of the banned African National Congress. Replying to the charge that his Inkatha organisation restricted membership to KwaZulu citizens, he said:

"No black is a foreigner in KwaZulu. We are all sons and daughters of Africa.

"We in KwaZulu were the first organisation since the days of the ANC to show the national colours of the black people of this country. We regard those colours not only as KwaZulu colours, but the national colours of the black people of South Africa. They emphasise our commitment to the black struggle".

Defending his right to occupy "positions on the home base and on the tribal level as chief of my tribe", he claimed:

"It was Walter Sisulu, actually, as Secretary General of the African National Congress, and Chief Lutuli, speaking as President of the ANC, who said it was in the interests of the liberation struggle of the African people that I should take those positions. They said I should take up those positions when I myself, as a young fire-eater, wanted to abandon those positions".

His claim cannot be checked. Lutuli is dead, and Walter Sisulu is serving a life sentence on Robben Island. But while it is possible that Lutuli and Sisulu may have advised him to stay on as a chief, what is quite certain is that neither of them, nor any other ANC leader, could have advised him to work the Bantustan machinery, for that would have been totally opposed to ANC policy, and neither Lutuli nor Sisulu would ever have promoted privately a policy which was in conflict with that they advocated publicly.

The quarrel of the liberation movement with Buthelezi is not that he is a chief, but that he pretends to be carrying on the tradition of the ANC while in reality opposing every aspect of present ANC policy — the armed struggle, the imposition of sanctions, etc. The serious consequences which flow from this duplicity are analysed by a correspondent in the article entitled "The Compromising Role of Inkatha" published in this issue of *The African Communist*.

CHINA'S ROAD TO WAR

Communists the world over have been saddened by the Sino-Soviet dispute, which has greatly weakened the potential for concerted action to eliminate the remaining bastions of capitalism and imperialism on every continent and to construct a firm foundation for the development of socialism on a global scale. Even those fence-sitters who for whatever reason have tried to maintain an attitude of neutrality on this issue by saying "it takes two to make a quarrel" cannot fail to support the initiative of the Supreme Soviet (by no means the first) when on February 24 this year it sent a message to the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress of China proposing a normalisation of relations.

The Soviet message, timed deliberately on the eve of the 11th Congress of the Communist Party of China, said that Soviet-Chinese relations in recent years were a cause for serious concern, leading not only to the creation of an atmosphere of mutual distrust but also to the heightening of tensions in inter-state relations. The vital interests of the Soviet and Chinese people, said the message, required the adoption of concrete practical measures aimed at normalising Soviet-Chinese relations in accordance with the aspirations and hopes of the peoples of the two countries.

Both countries had expressed the wish to build relations according to the principles of peaceful coexistence, and since the Soviet Union sincerely wished to see China a friendly prosperous power, the Supreme Soviet was once again stating its readiness to put an end to the present abnormal situation and to stop the further deterioration of relations which would have serious negative consequences not only for both countries but for the destinies of peace in the Far East, in Asia and throughout the world.

The Supreme Soviet therefore suggested that the two countries should come forward with a joint statement pledging to build the relations between them on the basis of peaceful coexistence, firmly adhering to the principles of equality, mutual respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity, non-interference in the internal affairs of each other and non-use of force. The Soviet Union declared its willingness to host a meeting of representatives of both sides to produce such a declaration, or to send a delegation to Peking if the Chinese preferred it. Alternatively the Soviet Union invited the Chinese to formulate their own proposals for the normalisation of relations between the two countries. The Soviet Union laid down no conditions for the holding of these talks.

The Soviet note was sent to the Chinese on the eve of the holding of the 11th Congress of the Communist Party of China, but failed to evoke any response from the Congress, which reaffirmed the basic tenets of Chinese foreign policy. On March 9, 1978, the Chinese Foreign Ministry sent its reply. The Chinese view is that any talks must be preceded by the fulfilment by the Soviet Union of a number of conditions — recognition of the existence of so-called "disputed areas" in Soviet territory adjoining the border between the two countries, the withdrawal of armed forces from these territories, the conclusion of an agreement on the preservation of the status quo on the border, the withdrawal of Soviet troops from the Mongolian People's Republic and along the entire length of the Soviet-Chinese border. Naturally enough, the Soviet Union finds these conditions unacceptable.

The Chinese rejection of the Soviet approach once again reveals that anti-Sovietism and great power chauvinism lie at the heart of Chinese foreign policy. It is because it regards the Soviet Union as its main enemy and maintains that war with the Soviet Union is inevitable that China seeks territory from the Soviet Union to strengthen its own position. But China's territorial ambitions do not stop there. In 1962, for instance, it seized large areas of Indian territory, and is still encouraging separatist movements in the border states. Four years ago it attacked the Paracel Islands, which belong by rights to Vietnam. It has laid claim to islands belonging to Japan and the Philippines.

One of the most reprehensible aspects of Chinese policy has been its encouragement of Kampuchean aggression against the Socialist Republic of Vietnam. Falsely alleging that the Socialist Republic of Vietnam aims to seize the whole of Kampuchea through the formation of an Indochinese Federation — a concept which the Vietnam government has repeatedly stated "has passed forever into history" — the government of Kampuchea conducts a fratricidal struggle against its neighbour in defiance of all logic and the true interests of the peoples of Indo-China and to the benefit only of imperialism. Kampuchea obtains a large measure of the inspiration for this dastardly venture — as well as most of the military hardware required — from the Chinese, who aim in this way to establish their own hegemony over the countries of south-east Asia, and to poison the friendly relations which at present exist between most of these countries and the Soviet Union.

The pursuit of its wrong policy has aligned the Chinese with all the ractionary regimes and tendencies of our modern age. China supports the most reactionary circles of imperialism in their policy of confrontation with the Soviet Union, and deplores the declarations of the Helsinki and Belgrade conferences calling for an extension of the spirit of detente in international relations. China is all for the development of the neutron bomb by the western powers. China supports the separate negotiations between President Sadat and the Begin government in the Middle East at the expense of the Palestinian people. China calls for the strengthening of NATO, CENTO and all other military blocs directed against the Soviet Union and the world-wide cause of socialism. China publicly congratulates the bloodstained Nimeiry and Pinochet for their murderous assaults on the Communist and working-class leaders and organisations in the Sudan and Chile. China allied itself with Vorster, Mobutu and the imperialists in the Angolan conflict, and was wholeheartedly in support of the Somali invasion of Ethiopia.

Pursuing its ridiculous "three worlds" doctrine, which ignores the basic contradiction between the capitalist and socialist systems and portrays the Soviet Union as an enemy of the national liberation movements, the Chinese leadership attempts to pass itself off as the natural ally of the liberation movements because it is also a developing country of the "third world". Yet in Africa, as elsewhere, China's wrong policy, based on hatred of the Soviet Union, has steered it again and again on to the side of the enemies of the liberation movement and into the camp of the imperialists and racists. In an attempt to rescue its reputation, China seeks to use its economic aid to African countries as a political weapon, but again it is to be found in bad company. Those countries like Angola and Ethiopia which are at the heart of the independence struggle in Africa today receive no assistance from China, but their enemies do.

The monstrous alignment of the Chinese leadership with the imperialists and racists is a crime not only against the world-wide struggle of the peoples for national liberation, socialism and peace, but also against their own people whose progress is impeded by the wrong policies pursued by their government. Isolated from their natural allies and supporters not only in the socialist countries but throughout the world, China inevitably becomes more and more dependent on imperialism, from whom it is now compelled to seek supplies of sophisticated military and technological equipment still beyond the capacity of its own economy.

Just how serious is the threat posed by the policy of the Chinese leadership to the development of socialism and peace was illustrated on May Day by the Chief of the British Defence Staff Sir Neill Cameron, who called for military collaboration between the two countries against their common enemy, the Soviet Union. His Chinese hosts in Peking thought the remarks appropriate for international labour day and, according to the news reports, "applauded vigorously". Lest it be thought that Cameron was voicing only his own blimpish opinion, Foreign Secretary Owen hastened to defend him and assured an anxious and outraged world that Cameron "is a senior and respected officer. He went there to discuss aspects of defence co-operation and I am sure that is what he intends to do".

That the Chinese leadership is actively promoting an alliance with the imperialists to bring about the destruction of the Soviet Union is a measure of the depths of degradation to which their policies have reduced them. But it is more than that, for the implementation of their plans would affect not only the Soviet Union, but also all the other socialist countries and the whole world-wide anti-imperialist movement at whose heart the Soviet Union stands. Many countries whose independence from imperialism has been won by the stuggle and sacrifice of their peoples aided by Soviet power would once again find themselves in thrall. Not least, China herself would become a victim of her own strategy and realise too late that she has helped to strengthen the bastions of imperialism, the main enemy now, as always, of peace, national independence and socialism in all corners of the globe.

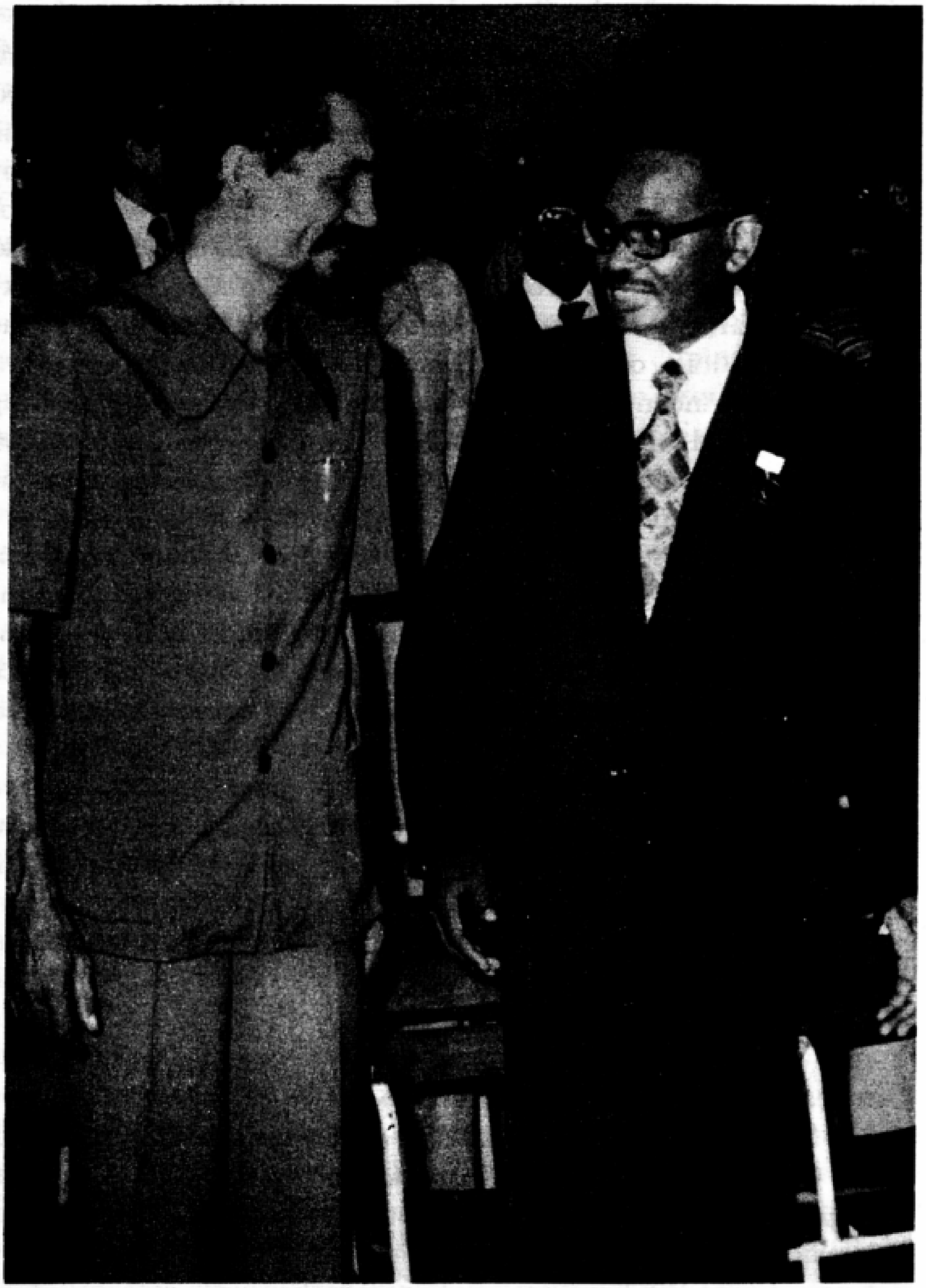
The longer the Chinese leadership continues on its present incorrect path, the harder it will be for them to break away. But there is no cause for defeatism. It should now be clear to all progressives that the so-called Soviet-Chinese dispute cannot be regarded as some sort of domestic quarrel from which they can avert their eyes in the hope that given time it will disappear. The issues at stake affect everyone, everywhere, for both peace and atomic war are indivisible. On this issue, as on all others, correct decisions must be adopted and action taken if what we regard as wrong is to be put right. Progressives everywhere must condemn and oppose the wrong policies of the Chinese leadership, and take whatever steps are possible to frustrate them. We are satisfied that, provided the right conditions are created both internally and externally, the great Chinese people themselves will take action to reverse the disastrous policies of their present leadership. The way will then be opened for the consolidation of the ranks of the world communist movement, the final rout and defeat of imperialism and rapid advance to the world-wide establishment of socialism for which so many millions have fought and sacrificed during the last century.

HOW THE ANGOLAN REVOLUTION WAS BUILT

In March of this year JOE SLOVO interviewed LUCIO LARA (TCHIWEKA), a member of the Political Bureau of MPLA Workers' Party and the Central Committee Secretary for Organisation. The following is a transcript of the discussion:

Joe Slovo: Comrade Lara, the MPLA is 21 years old, an age traditionally regarded as the symbol of maturity, and indeed it was in its 21st year that the MPLA constituted itself into a vanguard party of the working people guided by the principles of Marxism-Leninism. Short though its history has been, I can think of few organisations in our continent which have accumulated such a wealth and variety of revolutionary experiences; experiences which perhaps represent the microcosm of most of the basic problems confronting the African revolution in general.

You experienced every form of imperialism, including direct rule, neo-colonial attempts and direct intervention. Your struggle was



Lucio Lara (left) with Angolan President Agostinho Neto influenced and often dictated by the changing relationship of forces in the African continent, and especially on your borders. You moved from non-armed to armed struggle, and emerged victorious after two wars of liberation.

You faced the distortions of tribalism and racism and the problem of creating a true national consciousness. You continuously grappled with the problem of maintaining a correct balance between the national and class factors in your struggle. You were plagued by many divisions and factionalism and faced the destructive effects of fantoche movements. You gained political power as a broad movement which is now reconstituting itself into a vanguard party guided by Marxism-Leninism. Your victories were threatened by the attempted military coup led by some who had infiltrated your own organisation. And now you have set yourselves the task of creating the material and social conditions for the future building of socialism in a situation which was certainly not directly envisaged in the classics of Marxism.

The MPLA has in its short history overcome a multitude of obstacles and problems. The fact that it has done so is a tribute to the richness of its revolutionary theory and practice, in whose elaboration your President, Comrade Agostinho Neto, played such an outstanding role. Of course, every revolution has its own features, and specific solutions to problems can only be worked out by a movement with deep roots in the actual conditions of struggle. But I emphasize again that the kaleidoscope of MPLA experiences reflects perhaps the widest variety of problems which are common to the revolutionary process in much of our continent. The answers you have found and are continuing to find to these problems are instructive for revolutionaries everywhere.

General Historical Background

Joe Slovo: Comrade Lara, by way of an historical background, could you categorise the main phase of colonial rule and the changing character of the resistance to it up to the time of independence?

Lucio Lara: We have not as yet comprehensively categorised all those phases. But broadly stated, the following pattern emerges.

Portugal, a small power, began its era of colonial conquest in order to expand its markets. Early Portuguese penetration, during the so-called voyages of "discoveries" was effected by the Church and the merchant class. We can say that immediately after the entry of the Portuguese into the territory which now constitutes Angola, the long resistance started. That resistance was not always successful. As we know, our peoples were divided at that time into different kingdoms which had their own historical characteristics and differences. Therefore, it is not yet possible to speak of real unity in the struggle against the penetration which was later to be followed by direct colonial conquest.

Also, at that early stage, the power and even the novelty of these unknown people arriving with unknown goods, diminished to some extent the intensity and capacity of the people's resistance to that penetration. But later, in the era of direct colonial conquest, the character of the resistance assumed a different aspect. Our kings began to organise their kingdoms and formed various alliances so as to be able to resist that penetration more effectively.

The very nature of colonial penetration also gave rise to contradictions leading to actual wars between the colonisers themselves: the Portuguese, the Dutch and others. In some cases, these conflicts even facilitated the people's own resistance struggle. In any case, as we know, the colonists succeeded in installing themselves and our people were in fact defeated in a bloody conflict costing many, many lives, but which ended with the imposition of colonial domination on the people who today constitute Angola.

With the Berlin Conference, colonisation assumed its more contemporary aspect. Modern imperialism, driven by the economic developments in Europe's capitalist system needed to advance its aim of transforming its African colonies primarily into areas of raw materials extraction. For this purpose, the earlier commercial penetration had to be supplemented by total occupation and control. Thus, colonisation assumed a new aspect, that of the complete colonial occupation of Angola. In response, the people's resistance also assumed the aspect of protracted struggle against that occupation. This phase of the struggle which began at the end of the 19th Century, lasted until about the late 1920's. Owing to their might, and above all their organisation, the colonisers finally prevailed. Thereafter, for many decades, our more or less unorganised and disorientated peoples did not succeed in regrouping themselves and offering new, organised resistance.

Of course, the carving up of Africa also created other new circumstances. Many communities were separated by artificial boundaries, which also made united resistance more difficult. Then we entered the era which saw the re-emergence of resistance, first in the cultural field and later with a growing political content. Angolan intellectuals began to wage a fight against the repression and racism of Portuguese colonialism, but they still lacked a sufficiently clear idea of how to develop that resistance.

Finally, we arrived at the most recent era of resistance with a more direct political orientation, when our people started to see the need to organise themselves politically. But although the people began to feel the need to organise, there was no established tradition or experience of a modern organisation capable of confronting colonial oppression and exploitation. It was at this time that the MPLA emerged with a clear and more updated vision of how to organise resistance.

Joe Slovo: Portugal was the only major imperial power which, in the face of rising revolutionary pressures, refused to move towards attempts at a neo-colonial solution. Why was this so?

Lucio Lara: The fact that Portugal was so backward in the way it faced colonial problems had to do with the backward conditions in which the Portuguese people themselves lived.

We always maintain that Portuguese colonialism was an especially retrograde and backward form of colonialism, for a number of reasons. Portugal had an enormously high percentage of illiteracy and its people were themselves oppressed and lived in ignorance and obscurantism. The long years of Salazarist fascism under which they were forced to live further increased the degree of obscurantism in which they were engulfed. Partly because of this, the Portuguese people tended to support (albeit indirectly) the gains of colonial exploitation which benefited mainly the property-owning class in Portugal.

When the Portuguese bourgeoisie embarked upon the conquest of colonial markets, the Portuguese people in fact tended to go along with this process. Some of them also took a direct part in it, establishing themselves here in Angola and in the colonies in general, with their limited knowledge, their limited vision in dealing with other peoples. And therefore they also served, although unwittingly, as agents of oppression.

The settlers, the colonial bourgeoisie who dominated the whole life of the colonies, did not themselves have broad horizons. They got used to operating in an easy market, and relied on a form of slave labour. They developed the habit of not considering or treating the people they found in the colonies as human beings. Their own lack of culture prevented them from properly understanding the phenomena in which they were participating.

We know that the Second World War, to a certain extent, opened up new horizons for mankind, especially in the field of the rights of man, the struggle against racism, the problems of economic exploitation of people etc. But Portuguese colonialism, taken as a whole, was not able to see this process clearly. It approached the process in a confused and ignorant way (which was not not even scientific within its own terms) thinking that it would be possible to maintain the state of exploitation indefinitely. Strangely enough, the liberation war even encouraged Portuguese colonisers to make more investments, and to introduce even more privileges for the colonisers' sector. They believed that all this economic progress would be enough to guarantee colonial exploitation for eternity. They never thought it necessary to adapt to new conditions or even to seek, in a manner of speaking, modern forms of colonisation. This is, above all, because Portugal was a backward country.

Joe Slovo: In some of the MPLA documents a distinction is drawn between the struggle against colonialism and imperialism. What is the significance of this distinction?

Lucio Lara: In our struggle we did have those two phases. In the first phase, the struggle was focussed almost exclusively on the colonial regime which oppressed the Angolan people. But it did not take long for our anti-colonial struggle to assume a character more directly linked with the struggle against imperialism generally.

While the struggle against our specific colonial power was itself a struggle against imperialism, the fact is that at the start of our liberation war in the fifties, we did not as yet have in view a broader struggle against imperialism. But it did not take long for imperialism to understand the basic tendencies of the MPLA itself. Imperialism understood that the MPLA was moving towards a broad strategy which was not directed solely against Portuguese colonialism. It was a strategy already beginning to direct itself towards the struggle against imperialism. In the early sixties, when for example the MPLA opened offices in Kinshasa, then Leopoldville, imperialism already began to attack us directly. It understod that we were one of its most dangerous enemies and it wanted to neutralise the MPLA immediately.

In turn, these manoeuvres of imperialism stimulated a new consciousness amongst MPLA militants who began more and more to see our struggle as one which is not only anti-colonialist but also anti-imperialist. Of course, the process became much more evident during the much more difficult and delicate phase, on the eve of independence when we had to fight directly against the puppets and especially against all the agents of imperialism and those imperialist countries of Europe and America which deliberately supported the puppets to annihilate the MPLA. Moreover, even today this is still one of their objectives.

Nation and Language

Joe Slovo: The Angolan people have now won territorial sovereignty from Cabinda to Cunene. The early struggles of resistance centred around tribal and regional groupings. Even today, significant differences remain between large groups of people in regard to culture, language, local tradition, community spirit etc. Only a small proportion of the Angolan people fully understand the written and spoken national language. Could you comment on the significance of these realities, both in relation to your past efforts to create a national rather than a tribal or regional consciousness, and your present endeavours to take the process further. In other words, when the cultural Journal *Mensagem* proclaimed on its masthead in 1948 "Let us rediscover Angola", what was it that it set out to rediscover? What stage has the historic process of nation-formation reached in Angola?

Lucio Lara: That question is really one of the most preoccupying we face in all our activity. Angola, as it has been defined, is really a mosaic, so to speak, of cultures and traditions. And this reality has always been considered in the various steps taken to win total independence. From the very outset, those who founded the MPLA and gave it its initial orientation were very much concerned to revive the true culture of our people, culture in global terms, and in its localised content in each cultural area. It is really not an easy task. Take the problem of language, which is one of the biggest problems facing us. Our official language is Portuguese. At the same time we have to bear in mind that Portuguese is spoken only by a very small minority of the population. Outside the big centres, the people speak the original indigenous languages. Therefore this is an equation which still remains to be solved.

At the time of the war, when we began to embark on our literacy campaign, we were immediately confronted with this difficulty. What literacy primer should be used? We found that the primer in Portuguese was useless, because Portuguese itself expresses a whole culture which is, essentially, a foreign culture. Therefore it was found necessary for each cultural area to use a primer which used the language and drew on the culture of that specific cultural area.

Of course this was a project born of experience, a project which is only now becoming a reality. Since independence, we have set up the Languages Institute, with the main aim of preparing text-books for literacy teaching, which will go beyond just literacy teaching and seek to stimulate a cultural renaissance. The object is also to bring about rebirth of the cultural values of each cultural area. It is extraordinarily difficult and it even arouses a certain scepticism in some people who do not believe that a real solution is possible. But we believe that we are succeeding in mobilising our people ideologically, on the basis of the objectives and programme of our Party. And therefore with that line of unity, with that line of common thinking, it will be possible — although not easy — eventually to overcome all the barriers imposed by the fact of different cultural areas. All the same they really are serious barriers.

Very often, people try to explain the phenomena we still have today of a certain amount of counter-revolutionary activity (including infiltration, aimed at creating instability in our country, aimed even at destroying our party and our People's Republic), as if these activities were connected solely with questions of a tribal nature, of an ethnic nature, even linguistic.

But in the long run these are not the main issues. Our practical experience in the different areas shows that ideological unity based on the MPLA programme is extremely possible, and that with such ideological unity we are going to succeed in developing the diverse cultures which, in their totality, constitute the culture of the Angolan people as a whole.

Joe Slovo: You had in Angola a relatively big settler community which in different ways benefitted economically from the exploitation of the indigenous people. How did the MPLA confront the problem? And to what extent does it remain a problem today?

Lucio Lara: We think that in Angola today the problem has been very much diminished. With the outbreak of the Second Liberation War, there was panic in the settler community. They simply fled the country. For us, this phenomenon is extremely positive. Of course, their departure caused disequilibria, serious disequilibria, especially affecting economic factors in our country. Factories were left without technicians, farms were left without technicians or managers. But the truth of the matter is that those technicians, managers and administrators did not belong to the Angolan people. They belonged to a foreign community who exploited all the wealth of our people for their own benefit, without even bothering about how our people lived.

We can therefore say that this factor has been almost eradicated. That "almost" is still a relatively big "almost" today, because included in the outside forces are the big trusts which continue to exploit our country still. We can mention in particular, oil and diamonds, and perhaps also iron, although iron is already virtually in our hands. It is we how are going to deal with the question of iron, with our own enterprises which can ensure the development of the iron industry.

All in all, after the Second Liberation War, the effects of the large-scale settler presence here completely changed: what remains of the settler community in Angola has lost its settler character. Concretely speaking, there is still colonial thinking among commercial people, traders, industrialists, the odd few Portuguese or foreign industrialists. They do not however have the same power or authority here that they had before. They are here today as commercial representatives, industrial representatives of foreign systems, but they are wholly subject to the laws and control of our country. Obviously, it is in these circles that a good part of reaction is still to be found. But it is reaction which is already afraid, reaction which, we can say, cannot return to what it was. It has been defeated. It has no head. It has no solid footing. It is certain that here, power belongs to the Angolans, and no longer to foreign monopolies, etc.

Therefore, the effects of the remains of that presence, in Angola, have nothing in common with the effects of such a community in certain other African countries, where a powerful colonial presence has remained and still has hold of the economy. I believe that in Angola, that aspect is virtually over. Of course, we have traces, we have big companies which exploit the subsoil especially, and even the oil under the sea, but with them the Government of the PRA has already found a system of cooperation in which the Angolan people's sovereignty is properly confirmed and respected.

Joe Slovo: Could it be said that a special role was played in the colonial structure by the so-called assimilados and those of mixed race? If so, what impact did this fact have on the revolutionary process?

Lucio Lara: In the colonial structures the so-called assimilados and mestizos undoubtedly had, let us say, certain privileges. But these privileges found expression in two opposing tendencies amongst them. On the one hand, some of them were corrupted, alienated and made to identify with the colonisers. But on the other hand, quite a number of assimilados and mestizos joined us. They interpreted the great longings and aspirations of the exploited masses, and owing to the relatively privileged position in the colonial system, they had the possibility of achieving the kind of organisation which really served the interests of the masses.

In other words, a part of this group became alienated from the revolutionary process and joined the colonial side. Many of them even fled to Portugal. Some are still here, with that same mentality, but they have taken a purely defensive attitude. The other part of this group which identified with the aspirations of the people, joined the Movement, and is working with the Party with a view to achieving our objective of building socialism in our country. Of course, in all this process, there must be identification in terms of the class struggle, and on this question there are really delicate differentiations which need to be studied much more closely, much more deeply.

Classes and Class Structure

Joe Slovo: How would you describe the basic economic structure of Angola at the time of the formation of MPLA in 1956? What was the main mode of production and how did it relate to the other modes?

Lucio Lara: In a simplified way, we could classify the mode of production existing at that time as colonial capitalism, with all its components. Of course, it was colonial capitalism located in certain well determined, precise areas. In other areas, it only marginally affected the basic indigenous economic structures of our people.

In other words, in the latter areas, the contact with capitalism, with the capitalist mode of production, took the form of mercantile trade, which was sometimes done with cash and sometimes even without cash. Therefore, basically, we can define it as colonial capitalism, but with some ill-differentiated components which still remain to be studied.

Joe Slovo: How did the MPLA characterise the primary class contradictions?

Lucio Lara: The fundamental contradiction was between the exploiters and the exploited. On the one hand, there was a whole colonial structure, and on the other, the structure of the colonised. But, of course, each of these structures also had their component parts. Among the colonisers, seen as a group, there were also classes. There were workers, and settler peasants with special characteristics. There was a petty bourgeoisie, a bourgeoisie and quite a powerful comprador bourgeoisie.

In the same way, the exploited community also had its class divisions. We spoke a while ago of the assimilados, the mestizos who, because they lived in privileged positions, stood out as a privileged group. We cannot really speak of a large bourgeoisie among the indigenous peoples because the colonisers did not allow the formation of such a bourgeoisie which was in the process of formation but did not really succeed in developing. Then, we also had all the variants of a still embryonic working class and, above all, a vast peasant class.

Joe Slovo: What is the strength of the Angolan working class, its role in the liberation struggle and, more especially, the factors on both sides of the scale which influenced its capacity to carry out its historic mission as the principal class force of your continuing revolution? I have in mind the statement in one of your Congress documents to the effect that the organised working class represents the vanguard of the revolutionary movement which *will assume* its full role with the greater development of the productive forces and with the liberation of that working class from some obscurantist legacies in which colonialism drowned it.

Lucio Lara: Like almost everywhere in Africa, we can say that our working class is still young and fairly small. Our armed struggle involved, above all, the participation of the peasantry as a class. It also attracted some revolutionary intellectuals and some workers, although the participation of these categories was not yet pervasive enough to enable us to talk of their full involvement as classes. Nevertheless, we can truly claim that the working class — still embryonic at that stage, still without great class consciousness — was present at the founding of the MPLA. However, its participation was not decisive in the development of the struggle, because that was precisely the period in which it was still at the stage of developing as a class.

The increase in colonial investment during the war and the further development of the productive forces naturally influenced the growth of the working class. However, as soon as the right (although not yet the reality) to independence had been won with the legalising of the MPLA and its official arrival in Angola, the working class immediately started to assume its role as the most advanced class, organising itself rapidly and playing an effective role in the Second Liberation War. It began to bear the brunt of all the attempts made by the agents of imperialism to destroy the system we wanted to create.

We can therefore note in practice the facility with which the Angolan working class, although small in number, was able to join the process and play such an effective part in the Second National Liberation War. This fact reinforced the principle that the revolutionary process must be led by the working class. Our victory prepared the conditions to allow for the development of working class consciousness and to organise the working class. And today we are already in the phase in which our working class can begin to take hold of the reins of the revolutionary process here in Angola, including the physical participation of workers in the leading bodies.

Joe Slovo: It has been said by some writers on the problem of African revolution that in Africa the urban workers occupy a position of relative economic privilege compared to their rural brothers. The conclusion is then drawn that far from playing a revolutionary role, the urban workers will find their interests best served by making common cause with an elite, a bureaucracy and those who benefit from collaboration with neo-colonialism. This approach led Franz Fanon to speculate that the most revolutionary force in the urban areas would be the lumpenproletariat. Would you comment on this in relation to the Angolan experience?

Lucio Lara: When it is said that the urban workers are privileged and have a tendency to alienatè themselves, this would seem a childish and simplistic statement. Undoubtedly, some urban workers enjoy better conditions than many people in the rural areas. In our rural areas, for example, the effects of colonialisation are still very visible. Cultural development, schooling, health; in short, everything that represents progress, was relatively more neglected in the rural areas. There is really a contrast between conditions in the countryside and those in the towns. But that contrast, which is a legacy of the colonial system, still does not eliminate the fact that it is the urban worker who was most violently exploited by the colonial capitalist system.

In addition, we do not agree at all that in the towns the lumpenproletariat can be the leading force in the revolutionary process. On this question, we have had some revealing experience in Angola. In the Second Liberation War, the lumpenproletariat played an important role, because, for reasons that it is not so easy to explain, it chose to struggle alongside the MPLA. Indeed, the lumpenproletariat which exists particularly in Luanda and in some other towns, in Malanje, contributed quite a lot in the Second Liberation War.

But immediately after victory, this group became one of the most difficult problems we have had to face. We were forced to take rigorous measures. Even today we still suffer somewhat from the persisting distortions of that lumpenproletariat: distortions which make it unfit to advance with the revolution. Unfortunately we have not yet become sufficiently strong and well-organised to complete the process of recuperating that stratum which constitutes the lumpenproletariat. And for this reason, we continue to have difficulties with it.

In short, our experience has shown that the lumpen elements can help in a battle, but they are not capable of making a real revolution. It has always been and still is the working class which gains true political consciousness in the struggle and which grasps the process of the revolution and of the transition to socialism with the required degree of reliability and constancy.'

Trade Unions

Joe Slovo: In Mozambique, the pre-independence trade union movement seems to have been riddled by colonial influence, with the result that new foundations are being laid to create a completely new form of mass economic organisation among the workers in Mozambique. Can one say that in your case, there was some continuity?

Lucio Lara: No, one cannot speak of continuity in our process. During the Liberation War, we created UNTA, the National Union of Angolan Workers, a trade union centre which, because of the conditions of the struggle itself, did not operate legally. It played a role during the War, in organising the workers in general. For objective reasons, UNTA was more closely linked with the peasant sector than with the worker sector. In the big towns, occupied by colonialism, UNTA did not have much room for manoeuvre. Clandestine trade union movements did emerge which had certain links with UNTA, but these links were not effective ones.

There were also colonial trade unions controlled by puppets and settlers, which acted against the interests of the Angolan workers. In these unions there were also some assimilado Angolans, but they had very little say. When we achieved independence, there still remained a legacy of those trade unions. But there was certainly no continuity. The colonial style trade union organisation is being eliminated and destroyed, and in its place we are building a new trade union movement which is fully engaged in the revolutionary process.

Joe Slovo: Your first Congress talks of the worker-peasant alliance as the foundation of your perspectives to create conditions for the construction of socialism. What changes have taken place in the peasant sector since independence?

Lucio Lara: We can say that more than 80 per cent of our population remains linked to the peasant sector. The peasants were the greatest support of the entire liberation war. And precisely because they contributed so much to the survival of the guerillas, they also had a great influence in the guerilla war.

Today conditions in the countryside are different. The links which colonial capitalism had created with the peasant sector were completely structured and maintained to serve colonialism. Today these links no longer exist, and instead of this, we are faced with the task of creating new links within the framework of a worker–peasant alliance. These links must ensure that the produce of the peasants, their contribution to the national wealth, can be properly used in the interests of the whole of our society. But with the various circumstances which followed the Second Liberation War, which resulted in the destruction of the greater part of structures, communications, transport etc., we still have a long way to go to restore our links with the whole peasant system.

Support for peasant production, in seeds, fertilizers, agricultural implements and tractors, is now beginning to become effective. In the past few months, in particular, really great support has been given with the result that production is rising steadily. We feel sure that as from this year, with the more effective solution of problems, related to transport and, above all, to the better utilization of agricultural equipment, the Angolan peasant sector will begin to play its role more effectively as the main producer of food supplies for this country.

Joe Slovo: We know that in most of Africa the leadership of the national liberation movements has come from the ranks of the middle class, who after independence, monopolised all the main heights of State Power and used their positions to put a brake on the continuing revolutionary process. Cabral said that the petty bourgeoisie is the sector in Africa which is intellectually most aware of the reality of imperialist domination and is the only class capable of directing the State apparatus inherited from this domination. He adds that this is one of the weaknesses facing the African revolution, and that for the petty bourgeoisie to assume its proper revolutionary responsibilities it has to commit suicide as a class. How do you see the role of the petty bourgeoisie generally, and more especially its role in the Angolan revolution?

Lucio Lara: Precisely because it is made up of people who were to a certain extent privileged, who had access to schools, to study and knowledge of revolutionary theories, the African petty bourgeoisie was able to play an important part in the liberation struggles in which it, indeed, assumed a leading role. However, when the stage of independence is reached, when it is necessary to continue the revolution and to begin to lay effective foundations for the building of socialism, the role of the petty bourgeoisie must of necessity be reduced to more appropriate proportions. We believe that the petty bourgeoisie as such is not capable of reaching the end of the process without getting lost. And this is why it is necessary to ensure that the working class really assumes its leading role. It is above all this class which is capable of leading the process to the end. And in the case of Angola, this is exactly what experience has taught us.

In our country, a large number of revolutionary combatants came from the petty bourgeoisie. They joined the liberation movement, identified themselves with the working class, and its ideology, and also assumed the leadership of the revolutionary process. When independence was won in Angola, we noted that the petty bourgeoisie as a class hinders the continuity of the revolution.

It tends to go astray. It has very strong propensities towards opportunism and personal ambition, and lacks the kind of maturity which makes for consistency in the analysis of problems. We would not pose the problem by saying that the petty bourgeoisie has to commit suicide as a class. Our approach is that it will be neutralised by the changing correlation of class forces, especially by the action of the working class. As the working class gains consciousness, as the working class becomes more and more capable of assuming the leadership of the struggle, the leadership in building socialism, the role of the petty bourgeoisie will fade. In other words, the importance of the contribution of the petty bourgeoisie will become progressively less.

Today, in the Angolan revolutionary process, we can claim that the role of the petty bourgeoisie is already becoming more limited. We have already begun to wage a struggle against that part of the petty bourgeoisie which is still hungry for power, hungry to lead the process in its own way, without respecting the orientations given by the Party, without respecting the principles of the ideology of the working class. For us, therefore, it is not so much a question of suicide. It is much more a question of reduction, even of the future extinction of the importance of the petty bourgeoisie in the revolutionary process, which must be fully assumed by the working people, the working class in particular, and the peasants.

Role of the Chiefs

Joe Slovo: Could you refer to the role of the traditional social power structures such as the chieftainship etc. during the liberation struggle and today?

Lucio Lara: In Angola, this role is still important. We must recognise that the system of chieftaincy in Angola does not have the typically feudal character of other countries. For example, a chief in Mali is different from a chief in Angola. A *soba* in Angola does not have the same power or even the same influence as a *marabou*, a big chief, in Mali. Although the power of the chiefs is today much diminished, the institution is still of great importance. For example, in many areas of our country, especially in the rural areas, it is not appropriate to try to mobilize the people without previously mobilising the chief.

During the war, this was always the method used by the MPLA. On arriving in an area, the chief was first mobilised. Once the chief's support was won, it became much easier, and the support of the people was almost certain. And even today we use this approach wherever necessary. In some places, this is no longer necessary since it has become possible to create a politically formed authority to compete with the chief's authority. But almost everywhere, even where there is a chief, we have our Party activist who is a support for the Party in an area where the chief is also a support for the Party.

In other words, the activist does not take the chief's authority away from him. The activist tries to raise the chief's consciousness and to make him understand the goals of the revolution. Of course, in many cases owing to age, archaic custom and so on, this is no longer possible. But the more important thing is that the chief should be made to understand that the Party is there not so much to act against him and his authority, but to improve the conditions of the people and of the chief himself. In practice, wherever the Party arrives, the chief always explains to the Party that his people want schools, want a hospital, want a people's shop, in short, want all the benefits of progress that should be established in a community. We, of course, confront those chiefs who are reactionary. But when they accept and are interested in the principles of the Party, we let them continue to play a role in their community.

Joe Slovo: Could you say a few words on the role of organised religion in the Angolan revolution, and perhaps refer to the recent decree of the Political Bureau about organised religion?

Lucio Lara: In Angola we have many religions, and some important churches which have their role to play in our revolution. In fact, we have received support from some churches, in the sense that they accept the Party's principles, cooperate with the Party, and support those decisions which they believe benefit the people. We have other churches which have difficulty in understanding and accepting the Party. Very often, they base their reservations about our Party on ideological differences.

Of course there *are* basic ideological differences between materialism and idealism, but we do not think that for our people these are fundamental contradictions. Our people, even many of those who are very religious, have a very profound revolutionary urge. They are hungry for the benefits of the progress which was denied them for centuries. And this hunger for progress overshadows the importance of individual religious belief. In reality, thousands of Catholics and thousands of Protestants feel that it is the Party, the MPLA, which can really lead them to a more developed stage of progress.

Our Party does not regard itself as being in a state of warfare against the churches. But it is different with those sects like the Jehovah's Witnesses, which we recently banned. They are against

everything which means progress. They agitate against the very laws of religion, against enrolment in the army, against receiving blood transfusions or donating blood to an injured person and so on. Members of this sect are not normal citizens. They will have to be re-educated.

As regards the other religions, we believe that they should have the right to exercise their role within the framework of the ideological struggle which we, as a materialist Party, are waging. Those are the only limitations. Nor can we accept that organised religions should be free to provoke disloyalty, to discredit the Party, and to serve the counter-revolution and imperialism. Therefore those religions that accept the laws, will be allowed to exercise their role. Within this framework, we can even help them in many aspects of their life.

(To Be Concluded).

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THE HORN OF AFRICA — DEFEAT FOR IMPERIALISM

by A. Azad

For decades Africa was described by racist and imperialist ideologues and politicians and administrators as the "Dark Continent" and the people of Africa were merely the subject of history. Having devastated the land, economy, cultures, languages and traditions of the African people, the imperialists in the post-colonial period now seek to preserve their domination through the policy of neo-colonialism and the ideology of anti-communism. However, the days when the imperialist powers could with racist arrogance consider Africa as their own back-yard are over. Africa is on the move and constitutes a vital part of those world-wide forces which are busy making history. A number of countries have adopted the path of socialist orientation and in some of them the liberating creative science of Marxism-Leninism is becoming the dominant ideology. In racist South Africa, Namibia and Zimbabwe the struggle for national liberation has reached unprecedented heights. The response of the imperialists, multi-national corporations and local reaction

has been to intensify their counter-revolutionary, anti-people activities. This can be clearly seen in their efforts to throttle the Ethiopian Government and thereby reverse the revolutionary process in the Horn of Africa.

The Horn of Africa is an important geo-political and strategic area. Situated at the junction of Africa and Asia, it is vital to the sea routes through which passes approximately 70 per cent of the oil and other raw materials imported by capitalist Europe. As the Soviet weekly *New Times* points out: "In order to retain control over them, the United States and other imperialist powers, operating through Egypt, Sudan and Saudi Arabia, are trying to line up an alliance of reactionary Arab regimes backed by the financial sinew of Saudi Arabia so as to crush the revolutionary democratic regime in Ethiopia, which has now become the victim of Somali aggression, and to sever from Ethiopia its northeastern province of Eritrea and set up there a new reactionary Moslem vassal state dependent on its patrons." (No 7, February 1978, p. 14)

The Ogaden — comprising one third of Ethiopian territory — is mainly a desert with a nomadic population which had cultural links with Somalia. Since the independence of Somalia which united the two territories previously under British and Italian colonial subjugation, successive Somali governments have laid claims to a "Greater Somalia", comprising Somalia, the Ogaden, parts of Kenya and Djibouti. Though a great deal of verbal heat was generated from Somalia very little practical action was taken to retrieve the mythical "Greater Somalia". It was only after the revolutionary overthrow of Haile Selassie in 1974 that Somalia under the guise of the Western Somalia Liberation Front (WSLF) began to make serious preparations for an invasion of the Ogaden.

From the inception of the Ethiopian revolution, the reactionary and chauvinistic trend in Somalia succeeded in getting the Somali Government to adopt a hostile attitude. Large sections of the Somali people — including some progressive and democratic elements — duped by the strident rhetoric and demagogy of chauvinism refused to acknowledge that the possibilities for a new era had opened not only in Ethiopia but in Africa as a whole. They kept on insisting that Ethiopia could only be "revolutionary" if it agreed to voluntarily hand over the Ogaden to Somalia. This narrow chauvinist approach was grist to the mill of imperialist and Arab reaction which fanned the flames of the dispute.

Encouraged by these forces, the aggressive-minded leaders in Somalia started turning their backs on their natural allies — the socialist community. Throughout this period the Soviet Union did its utmost to convince the Somalis of their incorrect and dangerous position and called for a negotiated settlement of the dispute which would safeguard the revolutionary gains in both countries. But the Somali Government refused.

Egged on by the forces of reaction inside and outside Somalia the WSLF in June 1977 attacked and cut the railway line between Addis Ababa and the port of Djibouti. This was a highly provocative act since this railway line handles approximately 60 per cent of Ethiopia's export and import trade. A month later Siad Barre visited Saudi Arabia and received assurances of financial, political and military help. Thereafter, following the visit of Prince Fahad, the Saudi feudal ruler, to the United States, the State Department announced its intention of selling 'defensive weapons' to Somalia. This was the signal for Somalia's aggression.

Under the cover of the WSLF regular Somali troops invaded the Ogaden using highly sophisticated military equipment including tanks, artillery pieces and fighter planes. Within a few months the Somali troops had penetrated 300 kms in the south of Ethiopia, captured 70 per cent of the northern part of Ogaden and reached the outskirts of Harar and Dire Dawa, the third largest city in Ethiopia. At that time it was only the rearguard action of the Ethiopian army and its militia which prevented total defeat. Had Harar and Dire Dawa fallen the credibility and stability of the revolutionary government in Ethiopia would have been seriously impaired and the counter-revolutionary elements greatly encouraged.

Class Struggle

How was it possible for the Somali army to score such military successes in such a short period of time? At the beginning Somalia used to great effect the element of surprise and its superiority in military hardware as well as in the total number of troops engaged in the actual fighting. On the other hand, the Ethiopian army following the rupture with US imperialism — which was before the 1974 revolution its principal source of arms and training — was underequipped and unprepared. At that time a fierce class struggle — political and ideological — was going on within the Ethiopian army between the progressive and reactionary forces. A number of leading army officers stationed in the Ogaden kept on retreating and refusing to engage the Somali troops in battle in the hope that military defeats here and in Eritrea would demoralise the progressive elements and pave the way for a counter-coup by the reactionary and conservative pro-imperialist officers. Let us also recall that in addition to fighting in Eritrea the Ethiopian Government had also to contend with the counter-revolutionary terror organised by the EDU and the ultra-left EPRP.

Having reached the outskirts of Dire Dawa and meeting with resistance the Somali military command faced the thorny problem of ensuring a continuous supply of weapons, men and other essentials. Given the lack of manpower and resources, Somalia had great problems in attempting to find a solution. During the terrible drought in 1976, for example, it was only the assistance of the Soviet Union which saved the nomads from extinction. Thus it is reasonable to assume that the Somalis were banking on the fact that once they had occupied 70 per cent of the Ogaden the Ethiopian Government would feel compelled to negotiate from a position of weakness. To achieve this aim the Somalis, with the full support of Arab reaction and imperialism, launched a huge propaganda exercise to pressurise the Ethiopians to arrive at an "amicable solution". However, their hopes were dashed.

Reinforced by military equipment and material support from the socialist world, particularly Cuba and the Soviet Union, the Ethiopian army within a short period of time recaptured lost territory and inflicted heavy casualties on the Somali troops. These losses led to demoralisation within the ranks of the Somali army. To arrest this process the Somali regime declared a State of Emergency and initiated a spurious mass mobilisation campaign. It was in vain, since by March 1978 the Somalis had to admit defeat. Unfortunately the Somali regime and the WSLF are still adamantly insisting that "guerrilla warfare" shall continue. It is in the interests of all revolutionary forces in Africa that sooner rather than later, good sense must prevail and the aggressors realise the folly of pursuing such a course of action.

The bourgeois press and mass media in their insidious attempts to defend Somalia insist that the invasion was only "technically" an act of aggression. Technical it may be to the upholders of neo-colonialism and racism, but to the people of Ethiopia it was a question of the very existence of the revolution and the territorial integrity of the country. Somalia had violated some of the fundamental principles of the OAU Charter, such as "non-interference in the internal affairs of states," "peaceful settlement of disputes" and most important "respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity."

It was precisely to prevent inter-state conflicts from flaring up that the OAU meeting in Cairo, in July 1964, adopted a special resolution calling on all members "to respect their frontiers as existing at the achievement of independence." It is a fact that the territorial boundaries of Africa were imposed by colonial powers with flagrant disregard for tribal, ethnic and national questions. Moreover the creation of the nation-state in most African countries is a result of the anti-colonial national liberation struggle.

In the post-independence period African Governments faced the problem of either having continuous internecine warfare and total insecurity (always remembering that imperialism and its agencies like to fish in murky waters) or of finding the most suitable solution based on the renunciation of warfare. This was the approach indicated in the OAU decision of 1964. It is therefore not surprising that, despite the attempts of Somalia (which sent "goodwill" missions to a number of African countries — Egypt, Sudan, Saudi Arabia, Iran and the imperialist countries) the OAU stood firm. It refused to sanction the aggression or to condemn the invaluable all-round assistance of Cuba and the Soviet Union in Ethiopia.

The Somali aggression and reversal of its previous anti-imperialist positions raise serious problems for revolutionaries, particularly in Africa. Following the 1969 October revolution the military regime in Somalia embarked on the road of an anti-feudal and anti-imperialist revolution. Reversing the earlier neo-colonialist policies Siad Barre's regime developed close relations with the socialist countries. A great number of their army officers, students and technicians were trained in the Soviet Union and other socialist countries.

The ideas of scientific socialism were beginning to take root and to some extent this was reflected in the statements made by leading Somalis including Siad Barre. A campaign to involve the working people in political life was initiated by the orientation centres which were set up throughout the country. These mass mobilisation centres were active functioning organs at which lively political discussions and debates were held on national and international issues.

In 1976 the Somali Revolutionary Socialist Party was formed to pave the way for a transfer to democratic people's rule. The foundation of the Party was a historic step forward but as *The African Communist* pointed out, this was only the initial step as "there is still a long and arduous road to travel" (No 68, 1977, p. 83). In the economic field progressive measures such as the redistribution of land to peasants, nationalisation of certain key industries and the creation of a dominant state sector had put the country on the road of socialist orientation. At that time, Somalia was quite correctly held up as one of the countries in Africa in which a deep revolutionary process had begun.

Danger of Imperialism

How then can we explain the sharp reversal of the radical anti-imperialist policy and ideology that had been followed in Somalia? This is a complex question which needs continuous study and analysis. It is unpleasant but true that the imperialist powers, particularly US imperialism, still possess great reserves of economic, political, ideological and conspiratorial power which they use unscrupulously to undermine not only revolutionary democratic states but also socialist countries. A majority of the International Communist Movement is agreed that the counter-revolutionary events in Hungary, 1956, and Czechoslovakia, 1968, constituted a real threat to the development of socialism in those countries.

In the countries of socialist orientation in Africa where the soil for imperialist intrigue, maneouvre and outright intervention is still very fertile, the dangers are even greater. In most of these countries the social structures are undeveloped, and there is a small working class dispersed in numerous small enterprises. At the initial stage of the socialist revolution in these countries the superstructure is of primary significance and consequently political and ideological factors play a determining role. Leadership is in the hands of the revolutionary democrats who come mainly from the middle strata and who vacillate between the two main antagonistic classes.

One of the most significant phenomena in Africa today is the fact that more and more revolutionary democrats are seeking to turn their parties into Marxist-Leninist parties. In this respect the historic and momentous advance in Angola and Mozambique will have an impact well beyond the shores of Africa. On the other hand, there are revolutionary democrats who — despite their rhetorical adherence to the priorities of Marxism-Leninism — see socialism as a magical instant cure for the poverty and backwardness of their countries, and do not understand that it is a relatively long historical process in which fundamental changes are brought about in the economic base and superstructure of society and which is a preliminary stage leading on to communism. Whilst accepting one or other aspect of Marxism-Leninism they tend to ignore its class character.

It is an objective fact of social development that in the transition stage of socialist orientation a fierce class battle takes place against imperialism, multi-national corporations and their local instruments. Depending on the internal and external correlation of class forces, the dominant trend may either move in the direction of socialism or vacillate in its relations with the socialist community and with its own working class. Thus, we see that, depending on the level of socio-economic development, the extent of penetration of the science of Marxism-Leninism and the continuous intrigues of imperialism, it is possible for the revolutionary democrats to shift rapidly from publicly expressed progressive positions to anti-communism and anti-Sovietism. It is only consistent, principled anti-imperialist, anti-capitalist policies based on the will and active participation of the masses and strong ties with the socialist community that can ensure the isolation and defeat of the forces of reaction and neo-colonialism internally and externally.

Chauvinism

The recent events in Somalia graphically demonstrate that chauvinism is absolutely incompatible with socially progressive policies. Chauvinism arises from a belief in national exclusiveness and superiority and a refusal to have a class standpoint on national and international politics. The myth of recreating a "Greater Somalia" was taken to absurd levels. Instead of seeking harmonious fraternal relations with revolutionary Ethiopia which would have strengthened the entire anti-imperialist front in the Horn of Africa, Siad Barre launched a chauvinist campaign to justify his aggression. In these circumstances the socially progressive policies previously followed in Somalia were not only jeopardised but reversed.

After it had become evident that the socialist community was not going to support a policy of aggression and chauvinism a monstrous anti-Soviet anti-Cuban campaign was initiated. The Soviet Union and Cuba were accused of plotting to invade and annex the northern part of Somalia and unjustified allegations were made that the fighting in the Ogaden was done not by the Ethiopian army but by "Cuban mercenaries" and "Russian advisers". Whereas previously the streets of Mogadishu, the capital of Somalia, abounded with revolutionary slogans and posters, in the recent period they were replaced by anti-Soviet, anti-Cuban slogans. Anti-Soviet hysteria was taken to extreme limits. Even young school-children were drilled to voice reactionary slogans such as "Russians go home" and those Soviet citizens still living in Somalia were constantly insulted and harassed. Somalia unilaterally abrogated the Treaty of Friendship with the Soviet Union and "expelled" Soviet personnel whom they had invited in the first place. Pursuing this policy it was therefore not surprising that the Somali regime moved closer and closer to Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Sudan, Iran and the imperialist world.

Nevertheless it should be stressed that the present incorrect policy pursued in Somalia does not completely nullify the effect of previous progressive policies. These policies have a long-term impact and the forces for progress and socialism in Somalia have not been destroyed. There are many Somalis — civilians and military — trained in the Soviet Union and other Socialist countries who have not renounced their beliefs. At the height of the Somali aggression there was opposition from certain sections among military officers and in the

Central Committee of the SSRP. In the long run progressive ideas can never be completely suppressed, more so in Somalia where they do have some roots. In these very trying and difficult days the revolutionary anti-imperialist forces in Somalia deserve the support and solidarity of progressives everywhere. We should not, however, underestimate the strength and considerable influence still exercised by right-wing elements in Somalia.

Last April it was reported that a coup attempt by young army officers had failed. This attempt confirmed reports that following the defeat in the Ogaden serious dissension arose within the Somali army. Many officers expressed their opposition, not only to the strategy and tactics but to the aggression as a whole. No doubt this dispute will intensify the struggle between the pro-imperialist and anti-imperialist forces in Somalia. As Marxist-Leninists we do not have a putchist approach to revolutionary change. To be decisive, progressive changes, in Somalia as elsewhere, must be accomplished with the active support and participation of the working people. The anti-imperialist, anti-capitalist struggle in Somalia as in other parts of Africa may from time to time be impeded and distorted but it can never be completely halted or destroyed.

Eritrean Problem

To undermine the revolutionary process in Ethiopia and the Horn of Africa we should expect the unholy alliance between world imperialism and the Arab reactionary regimes to increase their nefarious activities in Eritrea.

The problem in Eritrea includes a whole reange of questions concerning the national question and its connection with territorial disputes. There are no easy solutions. Proceeding from the OAU decision on seeking a negotiated settlement of territorial disputes we have to take into account the internal, regional and international balance of class forces. In Eritrea the fundamental question is whether the continuing military conflict is in the interest of revolutionary transformation or of reaction and imperialism. At the present time continuation of military hostilities against the Ethiopian Government weakens the position of the revolutionary forces in Ethiopia and strengthens the hand of reactionaries who seek a military solution. Only a political solution can serve the interests of

Ethiopia, including Eritrea. If the secessionists succeed, the way would inevitably be opened for the dismemberment of the country.

Already the imperialists are busy stirring the murky pool of secessionist politics in other areas such as the Tigre. The legitimate interests and aspirations not only of the Eritreans but also of the other nationalities that make up the Ethiopian population can only be met by a policy of real regional autonomy in which the cultures, languages, traditions and political participation of the peoples concerned are not only defended but extended and developed. Given the present correlation of class forces and the direct intervention of Saudi Arabia and other reactionary regimes, an "independent" Eritrea would be completely dependent on its principal backers — the reactionary Arab regimes and world imperialism — and unable to pursue socially progressive policies. An "independent" Eritrea could then be used as a base for aggression not only against revolutionary Ethiopia but also the Democratic Republic of Yemen and for turning the Red Sea into an "Arab Lake".

The best solution lies in a class anti-imperialist, anti-reactionary policy in which the progressive and democratic forces in the two main Eritrean organisations work together with the revolutionaries in Ethiopia to help turn that country into a powerful bastion for social liberation in Africa as a whole. An important step in this direction has been taken by Ethiopia's repeated declaration of its willingness to grant self-determination short of secession to the Eritreans. A decisive period has been reached when it is necessary to isolate and inflict death blows on the forces of reaction throughout the country. In this way a united, democratic Ethiopia following socially progressive policies will be able not only to defeat the intrigues of imperialism and Arab reaction, but also to make a significant contribution to strengthening the position of the Democratic Republic of Yemen and the forces for socialism in Somalia.

It is in the interests of all peoples, including the Eritreans, to bring to fruition the National Democratic Programme of Ethiopia. This would in turn constitute a firm basis for the creation and building of a socialist society. There are still reactionary and "moderate" Ethiopians desperately seeking to reverse the course of history and once more turn their country into a pawn of US imperialism and Zionist Israel. This intense, fierce class battle requires the unity in action and purpose of *all* progressive, democratic and socialist forces in Ethiopia. In this lies the key to fulfilling the legitimate interests and aspirations of the Eritreans as well as of all the other nationalities and ethnic groups in Ethiopia. We note that Ahmed Nasser, leader of the Eritrean Liberation Front (Revolutionary Council), has also called for a negotiated settlement with the Ethiopian Government.

Arab Reactionaries

The revolutionary forces in Africa cannot afford to underestimate the counter-revolutionary role played by Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Sudan, the Gulf States and Iran not only in the Ogaden and Eritrea but in Africa as a whole. Increasingly Saudi Arabia — with its huge reserves of petro-dollars — is being used by imperialism to destabilise progressive countries in Africa. It supplied arms and money to Somalia and is the principal financial backer of the Eritrean secessionists. The feudal and semi-feudal obscurantist rulers in Saudi Arabia are consumed with a burning hatred for the ideology and policies of socialism. This country is orchestrating the reactionary and dangerous campaign to turn the Red Sea which is an international waterway into an "Arab Lake" and a preserve of the naval and merchant fleets of the imperialist countries.

Sadat, having already capitulated to imperialism's policies in the Middle East, which are designed to destroy the Palestinians, gave Somalia more than $130 million worth of arms and threatened to send troops to bolster the retreating Somali army. This traitor to the struggle against Zionism promised the US Congress that he would not utilise modern equipment and weapons from the United States to fight Zionist Israel but to "roll back communism" in Africa. Numeiri of Sudan — the butcher of our Communist comrades — who has thousands of Egyptian troops stationed in his country, also threatened to send help to Somalia and continues to offer sanctuary and bases to the counter-revolutionary EDU and the secessionists in Eritrea.

The exceptionally repressive regime in Iran — which imprisons and brutally tortures progressives, democrats and communists — also supplied Somalia with arms and finance and threatened to send its troops. This regime is the enemy of Africa. It supplies 90 per cent of racist South Africa's oil supplies and has considerably expanded its trade links with it. It is to be hoped that progressive Africa, which rejected with contempt the "detente" overtures of racist South Africa, will do likewise with those of the "honorary white" racists of Iran.

The action of the OAU in issuing a stern warning to Saudi Arabia and Iran not to meddle in African affairs was both timely and necessary. The OAU warning has even greater significance since it was reported that Iran and Saudi Arabia are masterminding a scheme to finance and back the counter-revolutionary pro-racist bandits of UNITA and FNLA in Angola. In the interests of freedom, national independence and peace the African countries should resolutely rebuff the dangerous role played by these new instruments of imperialism.

In contrast to the reactionary Arab regimes we have the exemplary role played by the Democratic Republic of Yemen. This country which is under constant attack and harassment from its neighbours and imperialism demonstrates how a truly revolutionary government can rise above the poison of chauvinism and take up an internationalist position. Reactionary Arab states have spared no effort to turn this country away from its policy of anti-imperialism and peace. Only recently Saudi Arabia offered more than $400 million in an effort to woo the leaders of the PDRY. But the leaders and people of the PDRY have constantly shown in practice that they constitute an integral part of the world-wide revolutionary forces.

The imperialist powers use unscrupulously the terrible legacy of colonialism, tribalism, ethnic and national problems and territorial disputes to fan inter-state conflicts and to divide the African people. In February 1978, representatives of five NATO countries, US, Britain, France, West Germany and Italy, met in Washington to co-ordinate their help to Somalia. They hypocritically called for a "negotiated settlement" of the conflict in the Ogaden but refused to denounce Somali aggression. To call for a negotiated settlement whilst the Somalis were still occupying a large part of Ethiopia and refusing to withdraw was indeed tacit support for the aggression. Not surprisingly, just after that meeting had ended Bonn gave a loan of 25 million marks to Somalia. Following the rout of the Somali forces in the Ogaden the NATO countries staged a provocative naval exercise in the Red Sea.

Imperialist Intrigue

Another dangerous aspect of imperialism's ideology and policy is to demagogically declare that "Africans should solve Africa's problems". This is no more than a smoke-screen for imperialist intervention, and to prevent progressive African countries and national liberation movements receiving legitimate material assistance from their natural allies the Soviet Union, Cuba and the other socialist countries. Africa should never forget the dastardly action of France in the internal conflict in Zaire. With the help of Moroccan troops the French kept in power the hated and discredited friend of Vorster — Mobutu.

Over the past year the imperialist powers and their mass media have conducted a hysterical anti-Soviet, anti-Cuban campaign. Reactionary monopoly circles and their political representatives started speculating on the process of detente and the SALT talks. Pressure was brought to bear on Carter — and nowhere was it expressed more stridently than in Britain — to put into jeopardy SALT and detente unless the "Russians and their Cuban allies" withdraw from the Ogaden and keep out of Eritrea. To retain their profits, privileges and influence in Africa the imperialists have undertaken a widespread and all-embracing political, ideological, economic and military offensive.

In this campaign they are unfortunately greatly assisted by Maoist China which constantly seeks to break the alliance between progressive states and national liberation movements in Africa and the socialist community. As soon as a country unilaterally breaks is relations with the Soviet Union the Chinese regime is quick to offer succour and support. Thus it was disquieting that just after his defeat in the Ogaden Siad Barre should pay an official visit to China and receive new assurances of backing for his anti-Soviet and anti-Ethiopian campaigns.

Notwithstanding the millions of dollars spent by monopoly capital and its agencies the anti-Soviet, anti-Communist onslaught is increasingly meeting with stiff resistance from the people of Africa. The Soviet Union, Cuba, GDR and other socialist states have consistently called for a peaceful solution to outstanding problems between African countries on the basis of territorial integrity and mutual respect for the sovereignty and independence of each country. As the socialist community has pointed out time and again they do not have any ulterior motives in Africa. No single socialist country owns any land, factory or building in Africa. They do not have any capital investments and consequently do not repatriate any profits. No single worker or peasant in Africa is exploited by the socialist countries.

The fraternal and decisive assistance given to Angola and Ethiopia was at the request of the legitimate government in power. When they have completed their tasks, the Cuban, Soviet and personnel from other socialist countries will return home when requested to do so by the Governments concerned. When they leave they will, as Raul Castro told the mass meeting following the First Congress of the MPLA-Workers' Party last year, take with them not Angola's diamonds, oil or other resources but the remains of their own dead who gave their lives so that Angola may be free and prosperous. A popular slogan on the streets of Soweto vividly characterises the correct approach. It reads: "The friend of my enemy, is my enemy, and the enemy of my enemy is my friend."

Following the defeat of chauvinism and imperialism in the Ogaden, imperialism and Arab reaction are concentrating their attention on Eritrea. By subterfuge and corruption they are attempting to prolong armed hostilities in Eritrea — and if possible in the Ogaden under the cover of the WSLF — in order to undermine and halt the revolutionary process in Ethiopia. The forces for revolutionary change in Africa will need to consolidate their actions in order to defeat the machinations and intrigues of the imperialists and Arab reactionary states in Africa as a whole.

PEOPLE'S GAINS IN THE ETHOPIAN REVOLUTION

by Berhanu Bayih
member, Standing Committee, Provisional Military Administrative Council of Socialist Ethiopia

Question: What new elements has the Programme of the National Democratic Revolution approved by the Provisional Military Administrative Council (PMAC) brought to the development of the revolutionary process in Ethiopia?

Answer: The Programme of the National Democratic Revolution lays down the guidelines for our revolutionary process. It establishes Ethiopia's entry upon the path of socialist orientation and sets as the goal of the national democratic stage the formation of a people's democractic republic led by the working-class party. This, the Programme says, will lay "a sound foundation for transition to socialism".

As you see, we accept the theory of the non-capitalist way of development. When we call our country "Socialist Ethiopia" we do not mean that we have already built up a socialist society. We merely want to show what we want, what our goal is. We are now at the stage of national democratic revolution. And we are aware that it will take much time before we can go over to socialist construction.

The key task today, according to the Programme, is to unite all the Marxist-Leninist organisations and groups which are active in Ethiopia. At first, we envisage their cooperation at every level, then formation of a united front on the basis of a common platform, and finally, complete organisational unity on the basis of ideological unity, which will mean the establishment of a Marxist-Leninist party, a proletarian party.

Marxist-Leninist party leadership, we believe, is a necessary condition for Ethiopia for full victory by a broad revolutionary front of all the anti-feudal and anti-imperialist forces, and it is our goal to form such a front. It may include mass organisations (trade unions, women's, youth and other organisations) and other progressive democratic parties, even if they are not Marxist-Leninist parties. Adoption of a joint action programme for struggle against imperialism, feudalism and bureaucratic capitalism is to be the main criterion. These are the three reactionary class forces which determine the nature of the present Ethiopian society as a semi-feudal and semi-capitalist society, and that is what the Ethiopian revolution seeks to change. The establishment of a broad revolutionary front will make it possible to hold elections to a National Assembly, which is to proclaim a People's Democratic Republic.

Consequently, one of the chief aims of the Ethiopian revolution is to hand power over to the people. This requires the establishment of a revolutionary Marxist-Leninist party of the proletariat, to act as the leading force in a broad national democratic front.

There are now five revolutionary Marxist-Leninist organisations and groups in Ethiopia, namely, the All-Ethiopian Socialist Movement, the Marxist-Leninist Revolutionary Organisation, the Revolutionary Seded (Fire), the Labour League and the Revolutionary Struggle of the Oppressed Peoples of Ethiopia. In June 1977, they proclaimed the establishment of the United Front of Ethiopian Marxist-Leninist Organisations on the basis of their common Action Programme. But for the time being they have their

Mass democractic organisations began to take shape from the very start of the revolution. The most important of these is the All-Ethiopian Trade Union, which was founded in 1977. Trade unions are being organised at the enterprises, in the industries and on a national level. The new trade unions have earned the greatest hatred of the reactionaries. You may be aware that both the first and the second chairmen of the All-Ethiopian Trade Union were killed by counter-revolutionary terrorists.[1]

Peasant associations are another important form of mass democratic organisation. Grass-roots peasant associations elect delegates to associations formed on the level of districts and provinces. The All-Ethiopian Peasant Association, which was founded in September 1977, is now acquiring organisational form. Peasant associations, which now bring together over 7 million farmers, enjoy fairly broad rights. For all practical purposes, they exercise the functions of local self-administration. They have their own executive bodies, judicial bodies and security agencies. Self-defence detachments have been set up everywhere. Their members have been given some military training and provided with weapons.

Urban dwellers' associations are another form of mass organisation. The grass-roots associations — *kebele* — of which more than 1,000 have already been set up, join in higher-level associations and then form urban centres. The members of each centre elect their executive organs. The Congress of the Urban centre nominates three persons form its midst, one of whom is appointed mayor by the government. These centres also set up judicial organs, security agencies and self-defence detachments.

Women's and young people's associations are also being set up, but for the time being only on the local and not yet on the national level. Let me add that those who head various types of associations at all levels are also targets of counter-revolutionary terrorist attacks. This provides fresh proof that the imperialists and reactionaries regard the establishment of mass organisations and their adoption of revolutionary ideas as a great threat to themselves.

Question: What are the main achievements and problems of the Ethiopian revolution in the socio-economic sphere?

Answer: First of all, there is the agrarian reform, which is perhaps the most radical in Africa. Under a decree issued by the PMAC in March 1975, all the land in the rural localities has been nationalised and proclaimed to be the Ethiopian people's collective property. This is a tremendous achievement for a country 90 per cent of whose population is peasant. The same PMAC decree simultaneously abolished land rent in every form, debt payments, and so on. Land can now no longer be either sold, divided or mortgaged.

Each peasant family has the free use of a plot of land not more than 10 hectacres in area. The big farms are not to be broken up but will be and are being converted into state farms. The establishment of cooperatives of peasant associations is being encouraged, including both service cooperatives and producer cooperatives. Peasants are already working simultaneously on their own plots and in the collective fields. They also help to cultivate the fields of families who have lost their bread-winner, where the bread-winner is at the front, or where the head of the family is old. The state farms will help to boost agricultural production, while setting an example for the peasants and showing them how to use modern methods in agriculture. In addition, the state farms supply peasants with fertilisers and render various types of services, especially those involving farming machinery.

Of course, the agrarian reform ran a different course in the various parts of the country. The point is that in the past there was a substantial difference between the system of landownership in the north and the south of Ethiopia. In the north, only seven per cent of the land belonged to the feudal lords, the rest being officially in communal ownership. Nominally, every peasant had the right to a plot of land, but there was a land shortage because of the very high density of the population in that part of the country.

In the south, feudal and church landownership was the prevalent form. The bulk of the peasants had no land and were tenants who had no rights and who could be driven off their plots at any time. Overall, 60 per cent of the farm land in Ethiopia belonged to less than 1,000 families. The feudal lords took up to 75 per cent of the peasants' crop.

Nationalisation, as I have said, was proclaimed everywhere. In the north, it was naturally easier to put it through right away. Incidentally, apart from expropriating the land which belonged to the feudals, the reform also destroyed many feudal customs and institutions which were not directly connected with landownership, like the so-called *gulte,* the right to collect taxes which the emperor gave the feudal lord for services rendered. Other feudal levies were also abolished. The peasants at once realised that their existence, their living standard was improving. Peasant associations and cooperatives, and cooperative shops in the towns are also being successfully established.

In the south, the reform caused much sharper upheavals. There, the feudal lords, who were in possession of virtually all the land, put up armed resistance. However, they were defeated, killed, driven out or disarmed, and strong peasant associations have now been set up in the area. A campaign, known as *Zemecha* — Development through Cooperation — had a great part to play. In the course of it, 60,000 students, teachers and soldiers went to the rural localities to support and teach the peasants. Let us note that within a year of the proclamation of the agrarian reform, farm output increased by 30 per cent.

In the towns, the land and all the extra houses (in the towns, one family can now own no more than one house) have been proclaimed government property. This reform dispossessed the same feudal lords and aristocrats who had owned tracts of land and many houses in the towns. Rent was reduced by between 15 and 50 per cent. In addition, taxes, which have now been unified and are collected by urban dwellers' centres, are being used to meet the needs of local development.

In Ethiopia, banks, insurance companies and the major industrial enterprises have been nationalised. Thus, the commanding heights of the economy are in the hands of the state. However, provision has also been made for some participation by local private capital in the country's development. This is in accord with the present stage, the stage of national democratic revolution. A ceiling has been established for private investment.

Mixed enterprises are also to be set up and developed. This implies cooperation between the government and foreign capital in developing industry. But if one takes the capitalist countries, only some of the old firms have by now joined the government in setting up mixed enterprises. Others have preferred to stop production.

The task now is to develop to the utmost mixed enterprises set up jointly with socialist countries. Ethiopia has engaged in coordinating economic plans with them, and has been receiving assistance from them. We believe that planning is the basis of success in economic activity. We now have a Central Planning Commission, but like other agencies it has a shortage of trained personnel. We seek to overcome these difficulties, making use of experts from socialist countries and sending our students to study there.

We also have other numerous difficulties arising from the war, the need to beat back the aggression, or from overt sabotage by counter-revolutionaries. One should bear in mind, after all, that two "political parties" — the Democratic Union and the People's Revolutionary Party[2] — and seven so-called liberation — actually separatist — fronts are now fighting the Ethiopian revolution with support from external reactionaries.

Question: What are the main problems the Ethiopian revolution has to face in its ideological-organisational work?

Answer: This is an exceptionally important sphere of activity. The revolution cannnot advance without a revolutionary workers' party. But Lenin said that there can be no revolutionary party without a [illegible] hy because of the persecution of progressive forces and the weakness of our working class. That is why when the revolution began we invited all the Ethiopians who had studied in other countries and had adopted Marxist-Leninist ideas to return home. We asked them whether they were willing to cooperate with the PMAC on the basis of its programme. They agreed. A Provisional Office for Mass Organisational Affairs was set up. When it began to operate, it turned out that these men were members of various groups, the five groups mentioned above, and that they have different views on a number of substantial matters. That is why we began to encourage them to cooperate and establish ideological unity. The PMAC believes that it would be a mistake to issue a formal decree merging these groups and proclaiming the establishment of a proletarian party "from the top". They must attain ideological and then organisational unity by themselves, and in the process win over to their side the industrial workers, the vanguard of the proletariat.

We have entrusted the Provisional Office with the preparations for setting up a Marxist-Leninist party and with carrying on agitation and propaganda work among the masses. It has been given all the necessary facilities, means of transport, etc. It set up its branches everywhere, including districts and villages. An Ideological School has been established in Addis Ababa. We have displayed full trust in these people, supplied them with weapons and provided protection from the EPRP killers. We have recommended them to the people.

However, after a little while one of these groups, namely, the Marxist All-Ethiopian Socialist Movement, or MAESON for short, decided that it was the strongest and aspired to subordinate the other groups. In the summer of 1977, the PMAC decided to reorganise the Provisional Office. The idea behind its decision was to give all the groups within it equal rights both in the work of the Office itself and — and this is highly important — in guiding the Ideological School.

When this had been done, some MAESON leaders were disappointed. Soon there came the Somali aggression against Ethiopia. In addition, the separatist movement in Eritrea was intensified, and the country's unity was threatened on every side. These were combined with the activities of internal counter-revolutionaries. And just when the battle of Dire Dawa (Ogaden region) was being fought, some of the MAESON leaders went into hiding.

It later turned out that it was the right-wing opportunist elements who had taken flight. They issued a statement listing all the dangers threatening the country and declared that the situation was hopeless. They claimed that the PMAC was doing nothing to save the country and the revolution. However, they miscalculated in expecting that the peasants would support them. Actually, the peasants arrested many of them. When the peasants handed them over to the revolutionary authorities, they said: "These are traitors, they themselves told us that the revolution should be defended to the end, and here is what they have done." The flight of some of the MAESON leaders spelt their political suicide. They were not supported by the people, and the group's left wing condemned them.

But the revolution was hit. Let me say briefly that among those who fled were men like Haile Fida, Chairman of the Office, two ministers, the Minister of Education and the Minister of Housing and

Urban Development, who was also responsible for the urban dwellers' centres, and his brother, a permanent secretary of the Ministry of Culture. This left vacant posts in the Mass Organisation Office and several other establishments, and these are not easy to fill. But the unity of the five Marxist-Leninist groups is now stronger and more solid, for the fugitive leaders had only paid lip-service to unity, while secretly working against it.

Question: How does the PMAC intend to start solving the nationalities question in Ethiopia?

Answer: Our Programme of National Democractic Revolution envisages a solution of the nationalities problem through a recognition of the right of each nationality in Ethiopia to self-determination in the form of regional autonomy. Ethiopia has many tribes and nationalities. We believe that recognition of each nationality's right to self-determination and regional autonomy is the correct way to solve the nationalities question in line with socialist principles and Ethiopia's objective conditions. We seek to translate it into practice, notably in Eritrea, for which we have worked out a special nine-point programme.

The PMAC has already proclaimed the equality of all the nationalities in the sphere of religion, language, culture, and so on. It is our intention to give all the nationalities of Ethiopia an opportunity to use their national language, to develop their economy and national culture, to enjoy all rights and to be free from any exploitation. We regard the nationalities question as an organic part of the overall question of class struggle.

Concerning the choice of form in which the self-determination of the country's nationalities is to be realised, namely, regional autonomy, that is Ethiopia's sovereign business. After all, this is not a liberation of colonies but free development of nationalities within revolutionary Ethiopia.

Question: What, in your opinion, has the Ethiopian revolution done for the world-wide anti-imperialist struggle?

Answer: The Ethiopian revolution can have a very important international role to play. Its success can largely promote the anti-imperialist struggle, and not only in Africa. They will also be a contribution to the socialist transformation of the world.

Our region is of tremendous strategic importance. If the Ethiopian revolution advances successfully, it will mean that our country will continue to play a big positive role within it, and also in Africa as a whole. Imperialism is aware of this and that is why it has been using its agents within and outside the country to undermine the development of our revolution.

Socialist Ethiopia's foreign policy is based on principles like peace, equality of all states, non-interference in their domestic affairs, non-alignment, and so on. These principles are clearly set out in the Programme of National Democratic Revolution.

Some ask us whether there is a contradiction between such a policy and our orientation on stronger friendship with the socialist countries. But we are sure that there is no contradiction here. After all, non-alignment means pursuit of an independent foreign policy. Our relations with other countries are our own business, they are a matter of our independent policy. Ethiopia is fighting against imperialism and internal reaction, and this is a struggle that cannot be carried on single-handed. Close relations with the socialist countries are needed also for successful socialist construction.

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1. Twendros Bekele was killed in February, and Temesgen Madebo in September 1977. — Ed.
2. Ethiopian Democratic Union, a counter-revolutionary party set up by feudals and former senior civil servants under the monarchy. The Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Party (EPRP) is a reactionary outfit using a cover of Marxist-Leninist catchwords. It has engaged in acts of terrorism against our political cadres, and virtually every day commits treacherous murders of leaders of trade unions, urban and peasant associations and other mass bodies. Its members are in fact agents of imperialism.

ELECTIONS IN MOZAMBIQUE — THE REALITY OF LIBERTY

By Spectator

Something remarkable has been happening in the south east of Africa. In a seventy-day period towards the end of 1977 new institutions of popular power were created through the length and breadth of the People's Republic of Mozambique. More than twenty thousand delegates were elected to various levels of popular assembly in the first general election ever held in the country. The elections conformed with an international pattern of revolutionary state development, but they were also distinctively Mozambican, reflecting not only the particular stage of development of the Republic, but also the characteristic style of FRELIMO.

The elections can only be understood if viewed as the continuation of a process begun in the liberated zones during the period of armed struggle..As all FRELIMO documents emphasise, a profound crisis hit the organisation in the years 1966-1969, involving a fierce struggle between two political lines.[1] The victory of the popular revolutionary line resulted in the struggle for national independence being converted into a struggle against all forms of exploitation. This involved a definition of the enemy in terms of a system not a people, so that the targets were identified not as the whites or even as colonialism, but as colonial capitalism and traditional feudalism.

In the liberated zones it was soon realised that the mere elimination of the Portuguese colonial presence left unanswered the question of what kind of society should be constructed in its place. Opportunist and ambitious elements inside Frelimo, using a combination of racist and traditionalist arguments, attempted to establish personal power bases in the liberated zones, subjecting the mass of the people to new forms of domination and exploitation.[2]

It was in opposition to this reactionary group that the FRELIMO Central Committee, led first by Eduardo Mondlane, president of the organisation, and then by his comrade successor Samora Machel, now President of the Republic, developed the distinctive FRELIMO approach to popular mobilisation and state construction, FRELIMO went beyond eliminating the colonial state apparatus, based on a system of magistrates, forced labour and taxes, to destroy also the traditional tribal structures. The struggle was broadened to include economic emancipation, the liberation of women and an end to the subjugation of the young.

This is a brilliant period in African and world political history, the sudden flowering in the bush and forest of northern Mozambique, amongst people kept for centuries in ignorance, of the most advanced and revolutionary ideas of mankind. Based on its experience of creating a new consciousness as it created new institutions of popular rule in the liberated zones, FRELIMO developed a clear view of the principles which should govern state development when the whole of Mozambique was liberated.

State Power

In an education document published early in 1974 to summarise the experience of a decade of armed struggle, President Samora Machel pointed out that their objective could never be to Africanise the existing colonial state.[3] He emphasized that the apparatus of power in an exploitative state was not a neutral instrument that could be used equally well by the enemy or by the people.

> "Therefore the decisive issue is not that of replacing European staff with African staff . . . Just as the colonialists have their way of fighting and we have ours, as they have their military science and we have ours, so do we have our power and they have theirs. There is conflict between us and them on the origin, nature, methods and objectives of power . . .
>
> "This power which is coming into being reflects the new balance of forces which is emerging in our country, which is favourable for a popular alliance. The exploiting minority's former dictatorship over the people is being replaced by the power of the people, which is being imposed on all colonialist forces and reactionary classes, the overwhelming majority prevailing over the tiny minority and destroying exploitation."

Shortly after these words were written, the military and political successes of FRELIMO and its sister liberation organisations produced a crisis in the Portuguese army that led to the overthrow of the forty-year-old dictatorship in Portugal. This in turn opened the way for a cease-fire and negotiated independence in Mozambique. At that stage vigorous attempts were made by the colonialists, especially the colonial bourgeoisie, to create a "third force" in the country, using the cry for elections or a plebiscite as a means of frustrating any hand-over of power to FRELIMO.[4]

FRELIMO pointed out that as the leader of the national liberation struggle and heir to the age-old resistance of the people to colonialism, as the agency which had directly contributed to forcing colonialism to release its grip on the country, it had no need to seek legitimacy. Elections would follow the transfer of power to FRELIMO as the proved representative of the Mozambican people, and could never be regarded as a precondition for the transfer of power. It was popular power that had created the possibility of elections, and not elections that had created the right to power.

FRELIMO insisted that it was prepared to discuss with the Portuguese Government only what it called the modalities of the transfer of power, and not the form that the new state would take. To have negotiated over the terms of the new constitution would have been a negation of incipient sovereignty. The Constitution of the People's Republic of Mozambique, including plans for the holding of elections, was accordingly drafted solely by Mozambicans, and was the product not of a team of constitutional experts but of the Central Committee of FRELIMO, which adopted it by acclamation on 20 June 1976, five days before independence.[5]

The Constitution laid down that the Popular Assembly would be the highest organ of state and the supreme legislative authority, but it did not specify any particular form of elections, stating merely that general elections were to be held within a year of the next Congress of FRELIMO. The third Congress of FRELIMO was in fact held in February 1977, and shortly afterwards an electoral law was drafted with the result that in the period September to December 1977 the first general elections ever in Mozambique took place.

The electoral law provided for a tiered series of popular assemblies, starting with local assemblies elected by direct franchise.[6] Delegates chosen for the local assemblies then had the further task of selecting representatives for district assemblies, while in the provincial capitals special elections were held to elect the municipal assemblies. Next the members of the district and municipal assemblies chose an electoral college, which elected the Provincial Assemblies. Finally, the Provincial Assemblies in a secret ballot elected the Popular Assembly for the whole country.

The elections had three principal objectives. The first was to create new organs of state at local municipal, district, provincial and national levels. In the liberated zones and in the country as a whole since independence, FRELIMO had acted in the triple capacity as creator of policy, mobiliser of the people, and implementer of policy. Now FRELIMO was to continue as the leading political force in the country, but the multifold needs of the people at all different levels would be dealt with by the new legislative authorities.[7] These in turn would create a new administration and judiciary, so that eventually all the organs of the colonial state would have been transformed into instruments of popular power.

The second objective was educational. The purpose of the elections was not to choose the form of society Mozambique would have. That issue had already been decided by the armed struggle and the victory of the popular revolutionary line inside FRELIMO which had established a direction confirmed by the massive popular support given to FRELIMO during the transitional period and finally consolidated during the Third Congress of FRELIMO. Weaker than the colonialists in armaments, poorer than the new would-be exploiters in resources, repudiating the obscurantism of the traditionalist reactionaries, FRELIMO all along had only one weapon — the support of the mass of workers and peasants, of revolutionary intellectuals, of all patriotic strata.

The elections assumed continuing mass support. What they required the electors to do was to discuss concretely what the new popular power meant in terms of the fitness of candidates. Candidates at each level were in fact listed by groupings of FRELIMO, the Women's Movement (O.M.M.) and the Army. The lists were then put to the people at mass meetings and each candidate was discussed and voted upon. It was these meetings which provided the liveliest and most distinctively Mozambican aspect of the elections.

The Meetings

Attendance at election meetings established that people's democratic power was not inconsistent with free discussion and vigorous debate. On the contrary, what was striking was that a combination of decisive leadership, well-constructed meetings and agreement on fundamentals of policy, created a basis for totally frank discussion which in turn gave meaning to the concept of popular affirmation or assumption of power.

The first meeting I attended was organised for residents of an elegant neighbourhood in Maputo. The hall was situated opposite the central prison, close to the Army Club where the fascist generals had once worked out their plans to liquidate FRELIMO, not far from the PIDE headquarters where the colonialist secret police had organised torture and assassination. Each of these reminders of the former power had now been taken over by the people — the prison still a prison, but largely run by the prisoners, the Army Club a FRELIMO centre, and the PIDE headquarters a museum.

About 500 people attended. If the Portuguese dictatorship had permitted meetings, attendance would have been ninety per cent white, ten per cent black. Now it was the opposite, reflecting the massive departure of the colonial bourgeoisie and the massive rehousing of the poor. But the many non-Africans attending were not participating as a protected minority with either an over-privileged or an under-privileged status. They were citizens like everyone else, entitled to vote and be voted for, and appeared fully comfortable. About half the audience were female, another remarkable transformation for a society where both colonial bourgeois and traditional feudal society had kept women out of political activity.

The meeting was orientated by Sergio Vieira, a veteran of the FRELIMO liberated zones, still young, a member of the Central Committee and head of the department of defence and security of the Party. The atmosphere is quiet, orderly. Freedom songs and songs of the new Mozambique are sung. It is so like a Congress meeting of the 1950's in South Africa, only less fervent, less impassioned, that I keep expecting the Special Branch to raid.

The orientation is low key, with many muted jokes and a constant gentle provocation of the audience, who are invited to ask questions and say what they think of the elections. It is explained that this is only a preliminary meeting to discuss the form of the elections and to introduce the two candidates, who come forward. The first is an elderly African man who had worked for many years in the commercial sector of the city — I last saw him helping with the mass community clean-up of Maputo after the city had been devastated by a freak hailstorm. The second is a white woman who nurses at the general hospital nearby, an activist in the local dynamising group of FRELIMO.

Sergio Vieira does not make a speech or deliver an exhortation. Rather he briefly explains the basic concepts of an election, and then tests the audience with questions. Can persons over 18 vote? Or is it 21? — "Eighteen", the audience respond. Can foreigners vote? No! Can former PIDE agents vote? No! Can former chiefs vote? *Indunas?* No! Can any of them be elected? No! He explains that the electoral law requires the voters to select people who contribute to the construction of Mozambique, are conscientious in their work, show a high degree of social consciousness and who conduct themselves well.

The law also requires them to reject people who (i) are former PIDE agents or who were active in any of the pro-Salazar or repressive agencies of the colonial state; (ii) are former chiefs or *indunas* who collaborated with the colonial authorities; or (iii) have conducted themselves badly.

This, then, is what the elections are going to be about. In discussing the attributes of candidates, the voters will be doing more than selecting suitable people for the assemblies, they will in a concrete way be debating what qualities the new society requires, what changes have taken place, and what kind of state is being constructed.

Students and Workers

The second meeting about a week later is orientated by the Minister of Justice, Rui Balthasar, a former advocate who had defended patriots during the liberation struggle and who had maintained clandestine contact with FRELIMO. In his early forties (the first person I have seen in Maputo wearing a tie), his orientation is direct and rather more formal than that given at the previous meeting. About 700 workers at the University have gathered to hear about the election.

The meeting is opened by the Rector, a history professor, a veteran FRELIMO militant who taught in a FRELIMO school in Tanzania during the armed struggle until victimised by opportunist racism from supporters of the reactionary line in FRELIMO. He gives a few brisk "Vivas" and hundreds of fists rise into the air: black, white, brown, hard, supple, delicate, the fists of students, cleaners, professors, typists and technicians, all workers at the University.

The Minister explains the rather complex election law, stressing that people in the towns could vote either as workers in different sectors of employment or as residents of their boroughs. He invites questions, and someone at the back immediately asks why there is no secret ballot. The Minister explains that the reasons are practical rather than theoretical: there has been no census for years, no voters' roll exists, and ninety per cent of the people are illiterate. In future, when these conditions are overcome, it would be possible to have a secret ballot.

Many more questions were asked, mainly by students, about the electoral law. They are put to the "Comrade Minister" in a direct and unembarrassed way. Eventually the Minister leaves to represent the University at a forthcoming youth meeting. The first part of the meeting was informative but not exciting; this part is livelier, as person after person criticises the way in which the list was composed.

A major point of contention is the balance between students and workers, with some workers claiming that they are under-represented. The secretary of the youth organisation replies that delegates represent the whole community, not just sections, and that in any event there would be many workers coming from other branches, whereas this was the only one that could elect students.

The third meeting is an actual election meeting, to select candidates to represent workers in education on the city assembly. About five hundred teachers, pupils, students, caretakers, technicians, professors and others sit on the ground outside the Faculty of Arts at the University, with voting cards in their hands. The meeting starts at 4.0 p.m., orientated by Oscar Monteiro, another young veteran of FRELIMO, member of the Central Committee and secretary for Party organisation, now in his late thirties. His style is informal, putting people at their ease.

The 26 listed candidates present themselves, giving brief biographical sketches. The first is a teacher who explains that she was born of anti-fascist parents in Portugal, came to Mozambique as a child, was studying in Portugal when FRELIMO asked Mozambican students to return home, and immediately did so. Then follow the stories of high school pupils, technicians, students, clerks, workers, teachers and a professor.

It is noticeable how broken up the education of the African candidates has been: a year of schooling here, two years there, a correspondence college and so on. The only candidate to be questioned at this stage is the university professor, who is asked whether he has been active in the political life of the university. He says no, but that he has tried to make his contribution through his work.

The next stage of the meeting consists of applications by two people to be granted dispensation for their past activities and to be allowed to vote. The first is an African man who says he belonged for some time to a Salazarist organisation and that although he held some position, had not done more than put material in envelopes. Someone who works with him says he is a good worker and a good person who secretly helped FRELIMO. He is asked to give details, and cannot do so.

Immediately a queue of people form next to the microphone. The format of the meeting becomes clear. Anyone who takes up a position next to the microphone has an absolute right to speak at any stage of the proceedings. There are no interruptions, there is no "dialogue". The speakers make their points directly, without attempts to be tactful. Most of them say they do not know enough about the applicant to support his request.

The applicant is given a chance to reply. He speaks at some length, rambling about his life, and then Oscar Monteiro sums up. The meeting must decide he says, but in his view the applicant's past should be more fully investigated to see how active his role was in support of the fascist authorities. This is clearly the view of the meeting, who vote unanimously for further investigation, after which the applicant walks sadly away.

The next applicant is a young white student of agriculture, who explains that he was born in Mozambique, went to school in Beira, and when called up for military service, joined the Commandos. There is a buzz amongst the audience. He had not been long in the Commandos and had not seen active service. Since independence he had been at the university, where he had tried to study well and contribute to the new society.

The meeting is asked whether anyone who has worked with him would like to speak about him. A queue develops and for more than an hour the merits and demerits of the applicant are debated. Several students speak in his favour: he takes part in collective work, he attends meetings and he helps his fellow students. On the "July" activities, when the students spend a month working with peasants in the rural zones, he behaved in a model fashion, working in a disciplined and effective manner, just as one would expect from a commando, as one African put it to laughter.

Then three workers speak in turn against him. Joining the Commandos was voluntary, they say, the Commandos massacred our people, he should not be allowed to vote. The third worker speaks in a jaunty fashion: we must throw out people like this, there is no place for them in our society. He speaks in general terms, using the word 'enemy' frequently. The audience gets restive and he receives no applause when he finishes.

Most of the speakers favour granting the vote, arguing that at the relevant time the fascist propaganda machine concealed the truth and confused many young people, but the last speaker opposes, on the ground that the applicant remains arrogant, showing no signs of remorse.

This is an echo of words used by President Samora Machel earlier in the week in a now famous confrontation with a former PIDE agent which had been broadcast and which had electrified the city. The President commented on the continuing arrogance of the former agent, and the speaker now is making a similar point. The audience seem to feel that the context is quite different, and there is a murmur against the speaker.

The applicant is then given his turn to reply. He stresses his regret at his decision to join the Commandos and mentions that his real reason was to get a year off pre-university study, and that he never intended to kill people in the villages. At least two-thirds of the audience seem to be in favour of his application, but a knot of workers is clearly opposed.

Oscar Monteiro sums up, very much like a judge, setting out the two sets of arguments. In his view the application should not be granted. The Commandos had been the main force against FRELIMO and had had a vicious record of massacre, and his audience would excuse him if he said that not even two years excellent political work at Eduardo Mondlane University could wipe out a record of voluntary service in the commandos. At the same time the applicant had conducted himself well and should be encouraged to integrate himself into the Mozambican nation. His recommendation is that the vote be refused on this occasion, but that the applicant be allowed to stay on at the meeting in a non-voting capacity. This proposal seems so principled and fair that it gets total support.

During the debate many strong feelings came out, tensions were revealed, people were aroused, absorbed, in a state of constant animation, Oscar Manteiro now delivers a serious exhortation to the audience about the importance of acknowledging the problems which have emerged, such as continuing racism and elitism at the University, since these could only be eliminated if brought out into the open and dealt with by collective work.

The final stage of the meeting consists of a discussion of the merits of the candidates, and for some hours the queue at the microphone is constantly replenished. Only once does Oscar Monteiro interrupt a speaker, and that is to tell a student talking about 'petit bourgeois' elements to use a language that everyone understands, not just some of his fellow students.

The university professor is severely criticised by a number of workers: he never attends meetings, he has no political consciousness, he "has one foot in Lisbon one in Maputo". He replies that he is not a political person, but makes his contribution through trying to help build up the university. A number of tensions clearly exist at certain schools: teachers, workers and pupils criticise each other.

Eventually at about 10:30 p.m., the scene lit up by an overhead projector, the vote is taken. Helped a bit by remarks from Oscar Monteiro that persons who are not militants of FRELIMO can be elected if they work conscientiously and have the confidence of the community, the professor is chosen with 22 other candidates. Three candidates are rejected on the basis of having worked in a negligent or improper manner. The atmosphere is astringent as they are voted down.

Finally, Oscar Monteiro sums up although he is still prepared to hand over the microphone even at this late hour to someone who comes to make a point in the middle of his final speech. He underlines the point that the reality of Mozambique is not to be found at the university, but consists of ignorance, illiteracy, disease, obscurantism, superstition, tribalism, the oppression of women and the subjugation of the young. At 11 p.m., seven hours after it started, the meeting is over.

Public Excitement

Later in the week I notice people all over town listening on transistor radios to live broadcasts of election meetings, as though to a test match. An accountant is charged with having inflated his expense account, candidates are exposed as ex-Pide informers, others are accused of sexual misconduct. Eventually this period of intense public involvement in the election campaign, which had started so quietly and had become dramatic once the issues had become concrete, is over. It is announced that there will be a popular carnival in the centre of Maputo to celebrate the holding of the elections.

Flags are out, thousands of people gather to watch dancing and gymnastics, hoping that the President, himself one of the voters, will appear. He does, greets the delegates, walks amongst the crowd, with children running after him, makes a brief radiant speech, leads some singing, and then is driven away. The dancing carries on until well after dark. At the bottom end of a closed-off street, a band of the People's Liberation Army (FPLM) is playing rock-samba music. Dancing, which once had been used by the colonialists as a tourist attraction heavily involved with prostitution, is being re-captured by the people, who literally start to dance in the streets to celebrate the affirmation of popular power.

This, then had become the third objective of the election - a popular festival to celebrate the victory of people's democratic power.

The Elected

Shortly afterwards the national Popular Assembly met, its delegates having been elected unanimously by the Provincial Assemblies using a secret ballot. The National Electoral Commission gives a full report on the elections, including a statistical breakdown of the candidates. (8).

Local Assemblies: 22,300 persons elected to 894 assemblies, including 28% women.
District Assemblies: 3,390 persons to 112 assemblies including 24% women.
Municipal Assemblies: 460 persons to 10 assemblies including 21% women.
Provincial Assemblies: 734 persons to 10 assemblies including 15% women.
Popular Assembly: 226 persons of whom 12% were women.

Altogether more than 2,300 candidates were rejected, about 1,000 for having belonged to the repressive colonial apparatus or puppet bodies, about 700 for having been chiefs and *indunas* who had voluntarily associated themselves with the colonial state, and about 650 for various forms of misbehaviour.

Well over half the delegates to the Popular Assembly were workers or peasants. The breakdown was as follows: workers - 31%; peasants - 29%; army - 15%; state employees - 11%; representatives of the women's and the youth organisations - 6%; others - 8%.

In a country with a legacy of 90 per cent illiteracy, emphasis on representation of workers and peasants inevitably meant that many delegates were unable to read and write, and one of the specific targets of the 'alphabetisation' programme for 1978 is to make all members of popular assemblies literate.

Biographies given in the weekly journal *Tempo* indicate the kind of people who have been raised from rags to positions of authority by the revolution. (9)

Micas Massingue never had a chance to study as a child. He looked after cattle, and then worked as a servant for many years, living in the backyards of various employers and being paid about £1 per month with virtually no time off. He slept on the floor in rooms without light, and had little opportunity to wash himself, and was blamed for anything that went wrong in the house. Eventually when forced to pay nearly a year's wages for a coat that went missing in the laundry, he abandoned domestic service and managed to get a job in a factory where he is still employed. In 1974 during the transitional period the workers requested a school in the factory, and he has managed to reach standard three.

Maria Maissa, another member of the 'People's Parliament', lost her father when she was very young. Her mother had had to look after five children, and whenever she had sought employment, had been compelled to take part in forced labour projects for the administration and the chiefs. Frequently her mother had had to flee with the children to avoid forced labour in rice fields or cotton plantations. Later she fled to avoid taxes; life was bitter for all of them. The administration would pass on instructions to the chiefs; who passed them down through tribal structures until they reached the field bosses who directly controlled the people, often beating them. Each worker had to produce a quota - for two or three months of arduous work they would be paid little more than £1.

Today her life has changed.

> "My greatest satisfaction", she says "is that I can write my name . . . Today we work collectively. All of us take part in production and all of us eat what we produce. In our district the people are really happy because we've built a new power. The dairy workers decided to lay on a festival to celebrate the elections, and we all had a great feast. Our job was to choose the best Mozambicans to be our deputies. Those who had belonged to the colonial structure, like the chiefs, the *indunas*, the PIDE agents, we put them aside. Some of them were furious, but we told them: You had your

time, now it's time for the poor, for the exploited to build our power."

Summing up the meaning of the elections, President Samora Machel told members of the Popular Assembly that the success of the process demonstrated the coherence and correctness of the line developed by FRELIMO in the period of armed struggle and afterwards. (10) Good planning and the effective fufilment of tasks had enabled the masses to participate in a manner that was active, free and popular. One comrade had told him: "The elections signify the reality of our liberty," and he agreed. The elections had been a great school, a great festival, a great means of realising the power of the true democracy in which they lived.

Conclusion

The first general elections ever held in Mozambique involved the participation at meetings of three million persons, a very large portion of the adult population. (11) Photographs, films, newspaper reports, broadcasts and personal attendance all testified to the lively character of these meetings. The people were encouraged to speak out, to feel that power was theirs, to take reponsibility for the new society. This was a continuation of the policies developed in the liberated zones during the period of struggle. Elections were regarded as part of the process of education and mobilisation, as arenas of class struggle.

Amongst many specific achievements, FRELIMO has developed a distinctive mode of work. The Mozambican revolution is part of the struggle of the peoples of the world for emancipation, but it also has its own personality, based on the particular conditions of Mozambique. Thus the recent elections represent a distinctive contribution not only to African liberation, but to revolutionary practice and theory for the whole world.

Within the general context of anti-imperialist and anti-racist struggle, each sector of liberation in southern Africa will have to define its own form, and in countries where the struggle for the vote has been a central feature of the struggle for self-determination, different patterns of election might emerge from those adopted in Mozambique. But what cannot be ignored in any area of southern Africa are the lessons so vividly brought home in Mozambique: that elections themselves can never be a magic device for resolving questions of power, that the class struggle is not suspended simply because elections are being held, and that the true guarantee of deep meaningful expression of popular will is the destruction of the apparatus of oppression and its replacement with organs of popular power.

Strong leadership by a vanguard party with a clear sense of direction does not pre-empt popular participation in the life of the country. On the contrary, it gives the mass of the working people the confidence and sense of purpose to assume responsibility for transforming their lives, and takes politics out of the realm of personal ambition and into the realm of community advance.

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(3) *Establishing People's Power to Serve the Masses* - Samora Machel, TCLSAC Toronto, 1976; Tanzania Publishing House, Dar Es Salaam 1977.

(4) *Datas e Documentos.*

(5) See Independence Issue of *Mozambique Revolution,* June 25, 1975, for the full text of the Constitution.

(6) The terms of the electoral law and other relevant documents are published in a special document of the National Committee to Organise Elections, Maputo, 1977.

(7) See Documents - footnote 2, p.112.

(8) The full text is in *Noticias,* 24 December, 1977, p. 9-10.

(9) *Tempo* No. 379, 8 January, 1978, p. 49.

(10) *The Constitution of the Popular Assemblies is an Important Victory over the Class Enemy* - full report in *Noticias* 24 December 1977.

(11) Report of National Electoral Commission, see footnote 8, at p. 10.

AFRICA NOTES AND COMMENT

by Vukani Mawethu

SUDAN: GASSIM AMIN IS STILL IN PRISON

The Continent of Africa is faced with a number of problems which need urgent solutions and prompt attention. In the course of looking for solutions opinions differ and those in power use it to silence the "opposition", that is patriots and fellow freedom fighters who for years sacrificed everything for the cause of the people and the working class of their countries. Such is the fate of Gassim Amin.

The younger generation of African revolutionaries and many readers of *The African Communist* might not know who Gassim Amin is. He is one of the founders of the Sudanese trade union movement. He, together with El Shafie Ahmed El Sheikh, the martyr who was brutally murdered by Gafaar Mohamed Numeiry in 1971, and others, led the first Sudanese workers' strike against the British colonialists in 1947. They fought for the recognition of the right to trade union organisation and were arrested and sent to prison. They

organised the railway workers and for this and many other activities they were jailed on several occasions.

In 1956 Sudan became independent. Gassim and his comrades knew that the struggle had to continue because their goal was not just national independence but social and class emancipation of the toiling masses. In 1958 the dictatorial Abboud military regime imprisoned him. On release he continued the struggle and his efforts were crowned with success when in 1964 the notorious Abboud regime collapsed.

Since 1969 he has been active in the international trade union movement and was elected Secretary of the Textile Workers' Trade Union International. In August 1974 he returned home on a misson as secretary of the Textile Workers' Trade Union International and on his arrival at Khartoum airport he was arrested and "disappeared".

To us South Africans this is reminiscent of the methods used by the racists and fascists who are ruling and ruining our country. That is why *we demand respect of trade union rights and the release of all political prisoners and detainees — communists and non-communists — in Sudan.* Africa and the world cannot keep silent while genuine African patriots, revolutionaries and internationalists are being harassed by international imperialism and internal reaction in our beloved continent.

ZAMBIA: ECONOMIC BLACKMAIL

Southern Africa is full of paradoxes. Zambia gained independence in 1964 and a year later Smith declared his Unilateral Declaration of Independence (UDI).

Since then Zambia has consistently declared and reaffirmed its support for the liberation struggle in Southern Africa, playing host to liberation movements of this area. For this she has had to pay heavily. The West European and American metal marketeers are worried about political developments in Africa, an area that supplies much of the West's copper, especially during these hard times of "world-wide" inflation. Smith and Vorster have consistently harassed

Zambia: landmines on the border with Rhodesia have killed Zambian peasants; Rhodesian troops and even planes have attacked Zambia, killing civilians during the so-called "hot pursuit" raids when Smith's forces were "hunting for the Patriotic Front"; Boss agents have been arrested in Zambia; "opposition groups" have emerged and collapsed, and foreign journalists, including many seemingly pro-African, have turned out sensational, malicious and even fabricated stories. Recently Her Excellency Miss L.P. Chibesakunda, High Commissioner for Zambia in Great Britain, was forced to reply to some of the reports of *New African Development* in the following words:

> "Your reporter would have done well not to repeat rumours in what I would like to think is a respectable magazine."

What has gone wrong in Zambia? Is Zambia really on the brink of bankruptcy? What are the problems? Who is the culprit? What is the way out?

When Zambia became independent she, like all former colonial countries, inherited the burdensome colonial heritage. Two countries feature prominently in the economic life of the young republic: South Africa and Britain. The post-independence Zambian imports from South Africa reached a peak of R67 million in 1968 and in the first six months of 1977 they were worth R18.5 million. These included machinery, particularly mining equipment, medicines and a range of other products, butter, cheese, cooking oil and detergents. Over the years imports from Britain have risen to make the UK Zambia's major supplier in place of South Africa. Whereas in 1969 South Africa's exports were 5 per cent more than the UK's, in 1977 Britain supplied Zambia with nearly R100 million worth of goods — more than three times the South African figure of R32 million.

Zambia is struggling hard to improve the economic situation. But in 1973 she officially closed her border with Rhodesia and in 1976 Mozambique followed suit. This was a sacrifice.

Since then much has happened but we shall deal here with three factors which have seriously affected the Zambian economy, namely: collapse of the copper price, demographic changes within the country and the effects of the Angolan war of liberation.

Copper Crisis

Zambia, like all "third world" countries, has depended on world prices for her products. The world price of copper collapsed from a peak of £1,400 per tonne in April, 1974 to fluctuate between £500 and just over £600 per tonne from December 1974 to February 1976. This slump in the price of copper was accompanied by an escalation of mining costs. One of the country's two big mining groups, the Nchanga Consolidated Copper Mines Ltd., revealed that production costs per tonne (excluding transport) were £507 in the year to April, 1975, an increase of over 25 per cent on the previous year. Transport added another £60 per tonne, "so that costs per tonne delivered overseas can now exceed price."

It should be remembered that government expenditure rose from £235 million in 1967 to £562 million in 1977. At the same time the revenue from copper, which has traditionally funded more than half of government expenditure, fell from £240 million in 1974 to £8 million in 1976. All this represented a serious setback in a country where copper provides 90 per cent of the country's foreign exchange earnings. About half of the country's gross domestic product comes from copper and one sixth of the country's recorded wage earners are copper miners. In Zambia copper sustains almost every other economic activity in the country. No wonder that in July 1976 Zambia experienced a 20 per cent devaluation of the Kwacha (Kl = Rl.10). This situation led to budgetary deficits, borrowing and accumulation of arrears on foreign payments; increase in the prices of goods ranging from the country's staple food (maize) to beer and cigarettes; foreign currency restrictions; rise in unemployment.

Population Explosion

Like all ex-colonial countries Zambia, which has 4.75 million people, has experienced what bourgeois sociologists call "population explosion". Industrialisation, however little, attracts people to the cities. The urban population in Zambia is rising rapidly: from 20.5 per cent in 1963 to 38.3 per cent in 1976 — other sources estimate the urban population growth rate between 1963-74 at 132 per cent while the rural population rose by only 9.5 per cent. Lusaka has an annual population growth rate of 9 per cent.

This migration from rural to urban areas leads to social problems.

The growth of the proletariat — the number of African mine workers has risen by one third since 1964 and the effectively unionised group is estimated at 50,000 — has been accompanied by a proliferation of an "informal sector": street vendors, bicycle repairmen, basket weavers, charcoal burners, "market women" and illicit distillers who operate in the slums around Lusaka, George Compound, Kanyama, etc. This gives rise to legislative and social problems because some of these forces are neither included in government statistics nor protected by minimum wage legislation: in 1973 the minimum legal wage was £24 per month and average earnings, depending on sectors, ranged between £11 and £60 a month and in 1972-73 average rural household incomes were estimated at between £9 and £13 a month.

This urbanisation affects the countryside adversely. Urban consumption is subsidised at the expense of rural incomes and this leads to rural stagnation. The African peasants are affected directly in a country where expatriate farmers still produce more than 30 per cent of the country's maize.

Talking about expatriates leads us to one of the most serious problems of our continent: the need to enhance the level of skills of our people. According to a survey carried out in Lusaka by the International Labour Organisation, half of the Zambians in top management jobs are unfit for the posts — managing directors and other senior executives in government-owned organisations and private companies lack basic educational qualifications necessary to run the companies. These people require tuition and training if inefficiency is to be avoided. This problem is not unique to Zambia; it is a problem affecting all former colonial countries and national liberation movements.

Neto's Statesmanship

If there is anything which became clear during the Angolan war of liberation it is that imperialism regards the whole region as one complex. The Benguela railway, which runs 200 km across Central Angola to the Atlantic port of Lobito, was damaged during the war and has been closed since 1975. (It should be stated that Savimbi's "guerrillas", Unita, have caused more damage to it since the end of the war).

The Benguela railway once carried more than half of Zambia's imports and exports and most of Zaire's minerals from the Shaba province. To reach the railway line, Zambia must first have Zaire's permission to move its goods along a stretch of Zaire's own rail system from Kolwezi to the Angolan border town of Texeira de Sousa. But Mobutu was looking in a different direction. What Zaire did was to switch most of her own trade, at immense cost, from Shaba overland through Zambia and Rhodesia to Port Elizabeth in South Africa.

President Neto has now made a gesture to Zambia stating that he is willing to do everything possible to help Zambia, even to the extent of helping construct a direct link for Zambia to the Benguela line and thus bypass Zaire.

The Way Out

The Zambian people and government are trying to overcome their problems. The agreement signed between Mozambique and Zambia in Lusaka on January 14, 1976 for the construction of a £7,500,000 road link between the two countries will serve two purposes:

- — it will guarantee a permanent route from Zambia to the sea and thus ease landlocked Zambia's transport problems;
- — it will help to solve the problems of congestion at the Dar es Salaam port which the Tanzam (Uhuru) railway cannot solve.

Zambia is making concrete attempts to improve and develop agriculture: water resources, fisheries, fertilisers, livestock, transport and marketing services and smallscale agricultural industries and foodstuffs. It seems that the 51 per cent nationalisations of 1969 will have to be accompanied by more radical actions so as to yield dividends. The Zambian leaders, especially President Kenneth Kaunda, have correctly emphasised that Zambians will have to do without a lot of non-essential items to make possible more vigorous programmes of economic recovery, reconstruction programmes and diversification of the economy which will help the young and struggling republic to achieve "self-sufficiency". This programme of "self-reliance" together with concrete steps to cooperate with the progressive states in the region: Mozambique, Angola, Tanzania and elsewhere on the continent will help the Zambian people to look for more reliable allies — as she is doing — outside the continent, especially the socialist countries who are always ready and willing to give a helping hand.

This is all the more important because some voices outside and inside Zambia tend to think that the way out of the crisis and to minimise the serious economic problems is to reopen the border with Rhodesia and to re-establish economic links with South Africa — the Malawi "example".

Those of us who are fighting for national liberation and social emancipation appreciate the difficulties and problems which Zambia faces precisely because of her commitment to our cause. Many of the problems she faces will confront us in the future.

OAU: THE TRIPOLI SESSION

The 30th session of the OAU Liberation Committee held in Tripoli from February 13-18 produced a number of resolutions and recommendations for consideration by the 30th session of the Ministerial Council of the OAU which was held in the same Libyan capital from February 20-28. These included a resolution on South Africa, condemnation of the Rhodesian "internal settlement", support for the Canary Islands Freedom Movement (MPAIAC) "which has yet to be formally recognised by the OAU" and a call for full OAU participation in the forthcoming International Conference on the Struggle Against Racial Discrimination to be held in Geneva from August 14-25, 1978.

The resolution on Zimbabwe reaffirmed the OAU decision of July 1977 which called on all movements in Zimbabwe to work under the banner of the Patriotic Front and went on to call on all member states in the OAU and UN not to recognise the results of these talks "now being held in Salisbury with unrepresentative elements". The resolution urged the OAU member states to increase their material and financial assistance to the armed struggle waged by the Patriotic Front and expressed "admiration and complete support for the Heads of State, peoples and governments of the frontline states for their acceptance of the obligation to work for the elimination of minority racialist regimes in Southern Africa out of their belief in the lofty principles of the OAU."

The resolution on South Africa denounced "once more" the so-called independence of Transkei and Bophuthatswana, military occupation by racist South Africa of Namibia and Smith's military aggression against Mozambique and other neighbouring countries "with the help of the oil it receives in a steady flow from such oil-producing countries as Iran". The mention of Iran should be seen in the light of the recent arrogant and irresponsible outbursts by the Shah of Iran who bellowed:

"Iran will not watch idly if Ethiopia attacks the borders of Somalia."

It should be remembered that 90% of South Africa's oil supply comes from Iran and when the OAU Committee of Seven on Oil Sanctions wanted to visit Iran, it was told that its members could only visit the country as tourists but not to discuss oil supplies to South Africa.

The OAU session urged the African group of nations at the UN in general, and the African Security Council members in particular "to work for the setting up of the appropriate machinery by the Security Council to ensure the strict observance of the arms embargo".

The resolution on Namibia reaffirmed the OAU support and assistance to SWAPO and condemned the illegal annexation by Pretoria of Walvis Bay which belongs to Namibia. A resolution on Palestine condemned Israel and affirmed support for the Palestinian people and the PLO "their sole legitimate representative."

Besides these welcome resolutions the Ministers adopted an $11,894,381 budget for the year June 1978 to June 1979 for the following sub-departments: African committee for Coordination and Union Action against Apartheid and Colonialism, the Africana Encyclopaedia project, the Association for the Advancement of Agricultural Science in Africa, the Association for Social Teaching in Africa, the Pan-African Women's Organisation, the African Trade Union Unity Organisation (OATUU), the International Association for Development of Library and Archive Documentation in Africa, the Pan-African Youth Movement and the Higher Council for Sport in Africa.

Khartoum, the capital of Sudan, will be the venue for the OAU's 15th Summit which will be held from July 18-21 and, as usual, will be preceded by the conference of Foreign Ministers. All 49 African

Heads of State will be invited as well as the national liberation movements, the representatives of the Arab League and the Islamic Conference.

The OAU is perhaps the largest continental organisation in the world and its prestige is growing, depending on how boldly it tackles the problems facing our people, especially the question of the liberation of Southern Africa, the Saharan question, interstate relations e.g. the Horn of Africa and the Libyan-Egyptian conflict, Mobutu's militarism and the whole question of anti-imperialist and anti-colonial struggle which cannot be divorced from international solidarity with all those who are genuinely fighting for national independence and social progress. The Soviet Union and the other socialist countries are always ready to give a helping hand.

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ONE-MAN ONE-VOTE IN NAMIBIA — WHAT IT MEANS

by Peter Mackintosh

The Vorster regime has decreed that Namibia shall receive its "independence" by December 31, 1978, and that this will be preceded by the election of a constituent assembly to draw up a new constitution for Namibia. If possible it wants to stage this election by agreement with the five Western powers with whom it has been conducting negotiations, and by implication with the agreement also of the United Nations and SWAPO. But if it cannot obtain such agreement, it intends to stage the elections on its own and reach an 'internal settlement' in Namibia on the same lines as Smith is attempting in Zimbabwe.

In proposing elections, South Africa pretends to be placing the whole issue of Namibian independence before the arbitration of the inhabitants of the territory. But the conditions which it is laying down for the holding of any elections make it clear that what South Africa is aiming for is the installation in Namibia of a regime which will be amenable to dictation from Pretoria.

The history of decolonisation since the last war has demonstrated that by themselves elections are not a mechanism for the transfer of power. In most colonies, elections have been held *before* independence because this gave the imperial power the ability to ensure that whatever government ensued would pursue policies acceptable to it. The South African Government is in a hurry to stage elections in Namibia while it is still in a position to determine the outcome. The longer the delay, the more power will slip out of the hands of the white majority, whose unity has already been fractured by the events of the last year.

South Africa's record of consultation of the peoples of Namibia since it was first entrusted with the mandate after the first world war is not an impressive one. For the most part the views of the black majority were ignored on the grounds that they were too backward to take political decisions. At the time when the fate of the former German colonies was first under discussion at the League of Nations, Smuts stated in a memorandum that South West Africa (as it was then called) was "inhabited by barbarians, who not only cannot possibly govern themselves, but to whom it would be impracticable to apply any ideas of political self-determination in the European sense". His plea for incorporation of the territory in South Africa, rejected at that time, was repeated when the United Nations discussed the future of the mandate in 1946, Smuts declaring again that the people of the territory were so backward that he could not envisage South West African self-government at any time in the future.

Smuts not only defended the record of South Africa's administration of its mandate (frequently criticised by the Mandates Commission), but also claimed that all sections of the population of South West Africa were in favour of incorporation. As far as the whites were concerned, he said, they had always voted for incorporation. And he went on to say (ignoring his previous declaration that the blacks were incapable of forming political opinions and taking political decisions) that the blacks were also in favour of incorporation. Denied the vote, how had they expressed this opinion?

A Government White Paper explained:

"The consultation of the Non-Europeans necessarily presented certain difficulties. It was therefore decided to entrust consultation to officials who had the necessary experience in Native Affairs . . . . Having regard to Native custom and susceptibilities, it was arranged to consult the different tribes as units and not as individuals".

In other words, the chief of the tribe, appointed and paid by the government, cast his vote on behalf of all the members of the tribe and signed a memorial as follows:

"We and our people wish the following matters to be made known to the peoples of the world:

"(1) That our people have been happy and have prospered under the rule of the Government of the Union of South Africa and that we should like that Government to continue to rule us;

"(2) That we do not wish any other government or people to rule us; and

"(3) That we would like our people to become part of the Union of South Africa".

The result of the 1946 referendum was given as follows:

For	208,850
Against	33,520
Not consulted	56,790

The White Paper explained that this number of 56,790 not consulted was due to the fact that "they are scattered on farms over the whole territory and because of the absence of authorised tribal headmen".

The very form of the questions makes it clear that the alternative of United Nations trusteeship was never even presented to the people. The Memorial spoke of "any other government or people", but under UN trusteeship there was no question of another power or people ruling in Namibia. Other passages from the White Paper indicate that tribes were led to believe that the alternative proposed for them would be similar to the brutal German colonial administration. Under the circumstances, those who voted "yes" opted for what they regarded as the lesser of two evils.

Realising that the world had not been impressed by this referendum, the Government conducted another one in 1947 and in September announced the results.

For incorporation	193,400
Against	31,800
Undecided	33,700
Not consulted	77,600 (including 10,000 temporary workers from Angola)

That made a total of 111,300 (in addition to the 31,800 definitely against) who could not be claimed as supporters of incorporation. The Government statement, however, blatantly claimed that "a large number of these are known to favour incorporation", and said they included 11,000 inhabitants of the Eastern Caprivi Zipfel "who, when originally consulted, expressed themselves unanimously in favour of incorporation". Those tribes voting against incorporation were conceded by the Government to be "in favour of some form of trusteeship".

Vote-rigging

Throughout the period of 'consultation', it was impossible for independent observers from South Africa or elsewhere to enter the reserves and check what was happening. But in the police zone, where the white population is congregated, it was clear the overwhelming majority of Africans were against incorporation. A special correspondent of the *Cape Times* who went as far as Windhoek wrote:

"It is generally conceded now that the consultations carried out among the tribes before UNO met were rather hasty. Although an honest attempt was made to sound Native opinion and the tribes were encouraged freely to express their own feelings, it is now realised, months afterwards, that thousands of tribesmen were still bewildered about the choice put to them".

And who can wonder at this when chiefs, who are little better than civil servants, are allowed to vote "unanimously" for their people; and when referendums are conducted by Native Affairs Department officials who can hardly be described as impartial scrutineers before whom it would have been prudent for a chief to express his opposition to the South African Government. Under Proclamation No. 15 of 1928 it was possible for the administration to remove and deport a chief without any right of appeal, and the South African Government has never shown reluctance to use these powers when it needs to.

If this was the contempt for African opinion shown by the Smuts Government, how much worse was the situation under the Nationalist Government that succeeded it. But as SWAPO stepped up the armed struggle for liberation, the Vorster regime has been forced to go through the motions of consulting African opinion — but of course always on tribal lines and often by way of ethnic elections.

Typical has been the experience of Owambo, so-called "homeland" of the Ovambo people who comprise 60% of the African population. In terms of Proclamation R107 of 27 April, 1973, Owambo was declared a "self-governing" area and provision was made for the election of a legislative council comprising 35 appointed and 21 elected members. The election was scheduled to take place on August 1 and 2.

Owambo at the time was experiencing a reign of terror as a result of the operation of Proclamation R17 which had been promulgated the previous year. This emergency law provided for indefinite detention without trial, a ban on all meetings unless authorised in writing by a Native Commissioner, and the banning of individuals. It was also made an offence to make an intimidating statement, to boycott a meeting called by an official, chief or headman and to fail to obey any lawful order given by a chief or headman or to treat him with disrespect.

Proclamation R17 was introduced in February 1972, and by April over 200 people had been detained. During the whole of 1972 a total of 303 persons were detained for periods ranging from 2 to 111 days. Of these 114 were charged with various offences under the regulations and found guilty, 28 were charged and acquitted and 161 were released without any charge having been laid. The chiefs were making the best of their powers by indulging in an orgy of public flogging of their opponents, men and women, on a scale which outraged public opinion throughout the world. SWAPO leaders and supporters were the main victims of Proclamation R17.

One would have thought that these powers were enough to ensure the victory of the government's puppets in the elections, but just to make certain, the Legislative Council decided on May 7 that political parties would be allowed in the territory only with the permission of the government. The Owambo government declared itself to be the Owamboland Independence Party (OIP), but no other parties were recognised or allowed to hold meetings. To screen events in the territory from public scrutiny, the Commissioner-General announced on July 27 — a few days before the election was due to take place — that no pressmen would be admitted to the territory except approved members of the South African Press Association.

SWAPO Boycott

Under the circumstances, SWAPO declared a boycott of the elections, maintaining that with all the restrictions in force it was impossible to approach the people freely and without fear. The OIP nominated its full quota of candidates, but they were opposed only in two of the seven tribal areas. Of 50,000 eligible voters from the two areas, only 1,300 went to the polls, the percentage poll being 2.5. Independent candidates gained three seats and the OIP three. All in all, it was a tremendous victory for SWAPO and a defeat for the government. The Commissioner-General of t South West Africa, Mr Jannie de Wet, [illegible] percentage poll, far from proving that the Government's policy was rejected by the people, demonstrated "that a modern election was completely foreign to the Ovambos". Nevertheless, the Government made preparations to repair the damage. A new constitution was promulgated in 1974, again providing for 35 nominated members, but doubling the number of elected members from 21 to 42. Elections were scheduled for 1975 and the Commissioner General (not the Owambo government, note) said that SWAPO would be able to campaign in the elections and that political parties would not have to apply to the Owambo government for the approval of their constitutions.

Proclamation R17, however, remained in force, and under its provisions the government and the chiefs launched a ferocious assault on the people to ensure a better turn-out in the elections. In many areas, tribal chiefs prohibited all political meetings, and SWAPO once again decided that it would not take part in the farce.

The elections were spread over five days, with tribal officials and police in attendance at the polls, allegedly to prevent intimidation, but in fact to exercise intimidation and dragoon people to vote.

Through these tactics, the government was able to announce that this time 55% of the electorate had gone to the polls. However, a notable feature was that in the tribal areas, where the chiefs were able to exercise their tyrannical powers unobserved by pressmen or other outsiders, 76% of 85,000 potential voters went to the polls, whereas in the police zone only 4% of 40,000 potential voters went to the polls. The Commissioner General, nevertheless, was apparently satisfied that elections were no longer "foreign" to the Ovambos, and declared at the opening of the new session that, as elected members were now in the majority, there could be no doubt that the Council was constituted on democratic lines and was representative of the people.

This underlying contempt of the Nationalist Party for the democratic process was again displayed in the so-called Turnhalle talks which opened in Windhoek on September 1, 1975. The talks were designed to draw up a new constitution for Namibia which the government hoped would turn aside the wrath of the UN and the international community in general. The very composition of the delegations who attended the Turnhalle talks was a measure of Nationalist insincerity. Delegations were admitted only on an ethnic basis, and those who attended were, in the case of the whites, members of the ruling Nationalist Party, and in the case of the blacks, Government-approved nominees of the various ethnic groups. Political parties like SWAPO which cut across ethnic lines and aimed at a unitary state based on universal suffrage without distinction of tribe or colour were excluded from the proceedings. It is worth noting that when the Turnhalle talks were first proposed, they were rejected by Chief Clemens Kapuuo as undemocratic, though he was later persuaded to change his mind.

Although the proceedings of the Turnhalle conference were held in camera, nothing could hide its true character from the people: it was a charade and a mockery, and could in no way represent the will of the Namibian people, who had never been consulted about it by way of election or referendum. When eventually the Turnhalle conference drew up a complicated plan of government on three tiers (national, ethnic and local) which entrenched ethnic division and left political and economic power firmly in white hands, the whites quickly registered their approval through a referendum and the proceedings were called off while the black delegates were still arguing about the details.

The Vorster regime had been given to understand quite plainly that the world would not accept the Turnhalle farce, and in July, 1977, appointed Mr Justice Marthinus Steyn as Administrator-General of the territory with instructions to hold elections for a constituent assembly so that Namibia could be proclaimed "independent" on December 31, 1978. To win confidence for his administration, Steyn introduced a few cosmetic reforms. The Mixed Marriages and Immorality Acts were repealed; a uniform education syllabus was proclaimed; Africans were allowed to own land in African townships; the pass laws were abolished, though Africans still required a permit to seek work in urban areas; Proclamation R17 was repealed, though not in areas adjacent to the Angolan border.

These superficial reforms were designed to win confidence from the international community that the conditions for free and fair elections had been brought into being. But for most whites and black in Namibia life continued very much as usual. The relations of property and power remained unchanged. And just how meaningless the reforms were was demonstrated when Administrator Steyn reintroduced emergency rule, with the power to arrest and detain indefinitely, after the assassination of Chief Kapuuo. By the end of April, 1978, most of SWAPO's internal leaders were in detention.

Nationalist Dilemma

The Nationalists in Namibia today are on the horns of a dilemma. They had been forced to change their tactics because of the ever-growing resistance to their policies of the Namibian people, led by SWAPO. Yet in the very process of trying to preserve its monopoly of power, the Nationalist Party found itself split. Almost half of its members in the Legislative Assembly, where it had won a clean sweep of all 18 seats in the last elections, followed Mudge to form his new Republican Party which, though its membership was from the outset restricted to whites, decided to co-operate with ethnically-minded blacks in the Democratic Turnhalle Alliance. Just as Smith had been forced to work with Muzorewa and Sithole in attempting to bring about an internal settlement in Zimbabwe, so Mudge, as the nominee of the Nationalist Party, realised that he needed black co-operation of some sort if an internal settlement was to be achieved in Namibia.

Addressing a gathering of 500 Potchefstroom University students at the beginning of May, Mudge stressed that there was no need to worry about the planned one-man one-vote election in Namibia because if the DTA came to power it would take steps to ensure that no more one-man one-vote elections were held in the territory.

"After this election every group will have its own representatives to stand in a future election", he said. "They will then form part of the central government. There wouldn't be the need for a one-man one-vote election again because the people would already have agreed in principle to the constitution of the DTA". (*Star* May 2, 1978).

And the DTA constitution is based on ethnic division and Bantustans. So if the racists have their way, Namibia's first one-man one-vote election would also be its last.

Events in Zimbabwe and Namibia make it clear that one-man one-vote elections as planned by the racists and imperialists are not a device for transferring power but for consolidating the power of the ruling class. SWAPO's past experience of racist vote-rigging in elections and referendums has made it sceptical of the possibilities of any free election being held so long as the racists control the administration and police and Namibia is under occupation by South African troops. It has also become clear that the tactic of the ruling racist clique has been to exacerbate tribal antagonisms according to the old imperialist principle of "divide and rule". The aim of the racists is to isolate and destroy SWAPO, whose members and supporters have come under increasing harassment and attack in the reign of terror which has been launched against them in recent months.

SWAPO has also seen through the aims of the western powers in their attempts to negotiate a neo-colonial solution in Namibia. In its political programme adopted at a Central Committee meeting in Lusaka in 1976, SWAPO has boldly proclaimed that "the economic reconstruction in a free, democratic and united Namibia will have, as its motive force, the establishment of a classless society. The social justice and progress for all is the governing idea behind every SWAPO policy decision. The government of a truly liberated Namibia will, therefore, be called upon to take the following measures:

"(1) Wage the struggle towards the abolition of all forms of exploitation of man by man and the destructive spirit of individualism and aggrandisement of wealth and power by individuals, groups or classes.

"(2) Ensure that all the major means of production and exchange of the country are in the ownership of the people".

It is clear that the freedom and independence of Namibia can never come from the hands of those who profit from the exploitation if its human and material resources, the owners of Tsumeb and Rossing and the house of De Beers.

SWAPO in Namibia, like the Patriotic Front in Zimbabwe, is determined to continue the armed struggle, not because it is cussed or combative, but because history has demonstrated that the holding of free and fair elections can only follow, not precede the ending of colonialism and the establishment of people's power. The old apparatus of repression and racism must be destroyed before free expression can be given to the popular will.

THE COMPROMISING ROLE OF INKATHA

by Ngacambaza Khumalo

As the masses of our people are rising against oppression, various political trends are also taking root within the country, some of them dangerous. A scientific revolutionary strategy demands a correct appreciation of the political character of the forces which are ranged against one another in the South African struggle for liberation. We can only eliminate apartheid and white supremacy, establish a national democracy and prepare the road for the advance to socialism if reactionary tendencies in all their forms and at all levels are consciously combatted. It is in this context that we choose to examine the origin and role of Inkatha in our struggle.

The original version of Inkatha was a cultural movement to assist in the preservation of the Zulu heritage. Inkatha Ka Zulu was founded in 1928 by King Solomon Ka Dinizulu, late uncle of Chief Gatsha Buthelezi.

It is worth noting that when the African National Congress was

founded in 1912, Dinizulu was invited to become its honorary vice-president owing to his courageous participation in the resistance of the Zulu people against white invasion. The very fact that the composition of the ANC included all African nationalities testifies to the fact that traditional methods of struggle had failed. There was a burning need for wider organisation, capable not only of leading all the oppressed people in South Africa, but also of using all available methods of struggle.

Inkatha was founded when the colonialist government, operating through the white ruling class and backed by British imperialism, was consolidating itself. The Land Act of 1913 which robbed our people of 87% of the land prompted the founding of the ANC to resist this land robbery and colonial domination as a nation. By 1928 the African National Congress and the Communist Party were enjoying widespread support among the oppressed people. The liberation movement was growing in strength. Because of this, Inkatha never became a force to reckon with and its activities at the time were hardly known. In fact it became defunct within a couple of years. It is understandable that such an organisation could not win support, even on a local basis, because of the existence of the national liberation movement which had in it such famous national leaders as John Dube, Albert Nzula, James Gumede and Johannes Nkosi who were active in Natal among the Zulus. There was therefore no necessity for Inkatha because of the national consciousness of the people and their participation in the liberation movement.

Yet 47 years later, this historically outdated organisation is revived. In order to show the true colours of this organisation, it is necessary to ask the following questions:

1. Who revived the organisation?
2. For what purpose has it been revived, and why particularly now?
3. What are the objectives of this organisation and whom does it serve?

Inkatha Ka Zulu has been revived and reorganised gradually since 1972 and was launched as a "National Cultural Liberation Movement" in a month-long session of the KwaZulu legislative assembly on March 22, 1975. The legislative assembly, consisting primarily of chiefs, unanimously elected Chief Gatsha Buthelezi as its first President.

The fact that Inkatha was launched in the KwaZulu legislative assembly, which is a creation of the racist regime's Bantustan policy, automatically renders it ineligible as part of the liberatory forces. This organisation was formed by Chief Gatsha Buthelezi in order to stifle any opposition against him in the KwaZulu Bantustan. This is borne out by the fact that the National Council of Inkatha which met in Nongoma in January 1976, passed a unanimous resolution rejecting the formation of political parties in KwaZulu (*Black Review* — 1975/1976 p 49). The council also noted that the Zulus were still bound in chains and that their primary goal was to free the "nation" from these chains.

The section of the Inkatha constitution dealing with the qualifications for election to the office of the President of the movement states that "A member of the movement shall not be qualified to be a candidate for the office of the President unless he is a citizen of KwaZulu and qualified for election to the office of Chief Minister." It further states that "If a person elected as president of the movement is not elected as Chief Minister of KwaZulu, he shall continue to be the President of the movement until another person is elected by the movement at the general conference and such other person shall then be the sole candidate for election to the office of Chief Minister of KwaZulu."

The Inkatha constitution further states that "No person shall be eligible for election as a member of the central committee unless he

— is a KwaZulu citizen

— is literate and conversant with the languages of KwaZulu."

From the last clause it is clear that Inkatha is an elitist organisation and that the broader masses have no chance of participating in the decision-making process.

Further it is also clear that Inkatha was founded to safeguard and perpetuate the Bantustan policy and to entrench Buthelezi's position in KwaZulu. It was ostensibly launched to unite the citizens of KwaZulu under a single leadership. However, as time went on, there emerged more talk, particularly from Inkatha public officers, of the movement's being a national organisation geared for the total emancipation of the South African black community as a whole.

Danger to Unity

This new image of Inkatha presents a danger to the national unity of the oppressed because of its tribal orientation and origin. It gives the notion that the Zulus are an important ethnic group around which national unity should be fostered. This trend reminds us of the rise of Afrikanerdom under which the Afrikaners say they are God's chosen people to liberate the white man in South Africa. This "cultural liberation" has brought us to the situation in which we are today. This narrow, chauvinist and ethnocentric position on which Inkatha was founded undermines the very essence of national unity which our liberation movement has over the years fought to achieve. Thus the "militant" and pseudo-revolutionary stance of Inkatha is in essence counter-revolutionary because it adds more complications to the future resolution of the national question.

Today Inkatha has even gone beyond its stand for "national" unity among the Africans. Buthelezi, Sonny Leon of the Coloured Labour Party and Y.S. Chinsamy of the Indian Reform Party have formed an alliance called the South African Black Alliance. The Alliance's provisional constitution drawn up at a meeting held in Cape Town on March 13, 1978 provides for:

☆ Endeavouring to create a just society;
☆ Determining a common strategy in the struggle against apartheid;
☆ Unifying all black organisations striving for political, economic and social change;
☆ Preparing the groundwork for a national convention to draw up a constitution for a non-racial South African society. *(Rand Daily Mail 14.3.1978).*

This "alliance" comes three years after Chief Buthelezi and the other Bantustan leaders had made a similar attempt to forge such an alliance in Umtata in 1973 and another Conference on Federation that had been called by Donald Woods in East London shortly after the Umtata Summit. These attempts failed because of differences between the leaders on the question of independence.

The new Alliance has its problems too. Buthelezi and Inkatha are opposed to the application of economic sanctions to South Africa, whilst the Labour Party is in favour. This is a matter of major importance at a time when the progressive forces in the international community are calling for total sanctions against South Africa, in response to demands by the African National Congress and its allies. These differences between the members of the Alliance must be solved if they are to work out a common strategy. No effective pressure can be exerted on the Vorster regime by internal groups unless they can reach full agreement on aims and methods, and unless they are prepared to use every tried and tested weapon in the revolutionary arsenal. Under the circumstances, we can be excused if we are sceptical about the capacity of the Alliance to realise the goals it has set itself.

The major weaknesses of the Alliance are:

1. The unity that has been forged is at leadership level and does not involve the masses.

2. All these parties are still operating on platforms created by the South African Government, namely the Bantustans, the Coloured Representative Council and the South African Indian Council. All these platforms have been rejected by the broad masses of our people.

The proposed national convention for drawing up a non-racial constitution for South Africa was suggested by the Congress Alliance as long ago as 1955 when the Freedom Charter was adopted and there is no need for any new Alliance to put this idea forward. The ranks of the liberation movement headed by the African National Congress are open to all on the basis of equality as decided by the Morogoro conference of the ANC in 1969.

This new Alliance, by spreading the illusion about a peaceful solution to the South African problem and declaring its opposition to armed struggle is attempting to render the revolutionary forces ineffective. As the *African Communist* pointed out in its issue No. 71, Fourth Quarter 1977 p. 32:

> "In the conditions obtaining in racist South Africa, where the ANC and the SACP had exhausted the potential of non-violent struggle, when the fascist regime had instituted a veritable reign of terror, where the oppressed masses were denied even the most elementary rights of bourgeois democracy, there was after the events in Sharpeville and the banning of the ANC no other way forward. The decision to engage in armed struggle was not taken lightly. Communists pursue the most humane goals and abhor violence for violence sake. But in the situation

prevailing in South Africa revolutionary violence is not only a sacred right but the sacred duty of the revolutionary movements."

In the light of the struggles in Mozambique and Angola and particularly the imperialists' attempts to subvert the revolutionary take-over in Namibia and Zimbabwe, we can only be suspicious of the motives behind this new Alliance. Buthelezi said after their meeting in Cape Town, as reported in the *Rand Daily Mail* 14.3.78, that "the Prime Minister, Mr. Vorster, will have to talk to South African black leaders in the same way as Mr Ian Smith has been forced to negotiate with black leaders in Rhodesia". He pointed out further that Vorster will have to do this "unless he wants the ghastly alternative he has warned about".

The ambitious hopes expressed in this statement indicate that the Alliance can play into the hands of racism and imperialism by offering to take part in an "internal settlement" as an alternative to the liberation movement and its aims as defined in the Freedom Charter and the ANC Strategy and Tactics. We must be vigilant to expose any attempts by members of the Alliance to undermine our movement in this way.

The task of our movement is therefore to continue to rally all the people of South Africa under the leadership of the ANC and expose all tricks and machinations which constitute a danger to the realisation of the aspirations of our people. Our prime task today is to steel our people to meet the requirements of the armed struggle, and to intensify that struggle so that it can harness the full strength of the people for the achievement of final victory. Those who propose compromise when the strength and resolve of the people are growing must be swept aside.

RACISM AND FASCISM IN THE SOUTHERN ATLANTIC

by Sergio Sierra

The political and military problems of the Southern Atlantic are increasingly capturing the attention of the world's press. It is a constant theme for the spokesmen of the fascist dictatorships and reactionary governments under which several Latin American countries are suffering. If we take the daily paper *El Pais* of Montevideo as an example it is going ahead full-steam on a campaign in defence and praise of the regimes of the Republic of South Africa and Rhodesia. And this arose precisely when the General Assembly of the United Nations "condemns all cooperation with South Africa, particularly in the atomic and military fields." At the same time, and especially since the liberation of Angola and the existence of a so-called "Soviet-Cuban threat", the plan for a South Atlantic Treaty Organisation (SATO) is constantly brought up.

There are several factors which combine to support such suppositions. The international isolation towards which the representatives of fascism and apartheid are being carried, forces these powers towards the forging of closer links and to desperate manoeuvres of rapprochement which are above and beyond their political and ideological relationship. This enables them at the same time to give each other mutual support, not only on an international scale, but also against the background of the repression within each country, which is becoming more and more coordinated in the "dark zones" which still exist through the world.

The expansionist tendencies of South African capital and the "open doors" policy to foreign investment which is followed by the tyrannical governments of Uruguay, Paraguay and Chile are also important. The plans *to save* white racists from the wave of liberation that is spreading through Africa by converting them into colonizers, acting in Latin America as exporters of apartheid, hold a very important place for the respective dictatorships.[1]

But there is something more: behind the regimes and personalities condemned by the international community, are the most reactionary sectors of North American imperialism, especially those circles within the Pentagon for whom the creation of SATO would constitute not only a means of strengthening their strategic hegemony in the Atlantic but the missing link in the chain of military bases with which they have managed to surround the globe.

The link with NATO would then come into being de facto, without formally compromising the members of the North Atlantic Pact by the official membership of South Africa. The Yankee strategists would then "take their chestnuts out of the fire" with the hands of their lesser partners or dependants in the south of Latin America.

Tightening of Fascist Links

In August 1975, Vorster visited Uruguay and Paraguay. In both countries he was the object of the warmest demonstrations of sympathy and admiration by the government authorities. This is the logic of fascism. The head of the only state in the world which proclaims racism and apartheid as official doctrine once made the following statement:

> "We stand for Christian nationalism, which is an ally of national socialism. You can call this anti-democratic principle dictatorship if you

wish. In Italy it is called fascism, in Germany national socialism, and in South Africa Christian Nationalism."

The fact that the spokesmen for the Uruguayan dictatorship call it "new democracy" and Pinochet calls it "authoritarian democracy" certainly does not change it: in essence it is the same.

The economic, technical and military relations have not ceased to grow, since Vorster's visit, between the Republic of South Africa and the governments of the Southern Cone of Latin America. In October 1976 — as mentioned in *Le Monde Diplomatique,* and in its turn *Latin America Newsletter* 17.12.76 — four different groups of South African industrialists and financiers arrived in Uruguay, Brazil and Argentine for an exploratory mission to discuss plans for loans, the exploitation of mines and naval and aeronautic construction (LMD No276, 12.76). The possibility of white immigration from South African and Rhodesia was also considered at that time.

In Uruguay, an important investment of South African capital was made (in accordance with the de-nationalisation policies of the dictatorship) destined to take over ownership of the cement plant of the official body ANCAP (National Administration of Fuels, Alcohols and Portland) and the construction of a big freezer plant. Paraguay received a credit for the installation of several plants. The international monopoly Anglo-American Corporation, which operates in South Africa bought half the shares in the most important company in the gold industry of Brazil. And in Chile preliminary plans for joint commercial and financial operations were made.

The links between SA and certain Latin American states were examined in a special report published by the General Assembly of the UN shortly after the UN seminar on questions of the fight against apartheid which took place in Havana in May 1976. It was pointed out in this document that SA is successfully developing its relations with the most reactionary regimes of Latin America and that this is vital for South Africa in its efforts to break out of the international isolation which its racist policies have led to.

The name of Artigas' country was stained when the Uruguayan government became the *only one in the world* to send an official representative, General Boscan Hontou, to the farcical ceremony installing the "independent" government of the Transkei. The prodictatorship newspaper *El Pais* published, on 14th November 1976, several pages of speeches and photographs of the ceremony, eulogising the system of "Bantustans" which, as is well known, is an attempt to turn the 18 million blacks in South Africa into immigrant labour. The specific case of the Transkei stands out as a country where the population is condemned to extreme misery and 40 per cent of children die before they reach the age of ten.

The propaganda in favour of SA has not stopped growing under the dictatorship in Uruguay. The aforementioned newspaper *El Pais* carries this to ridiculous extremes. As an example, its editorial entitled "Africa's Destiny" is very enlightening. In one of its habitual tirades against the policy of detente, it cites the African problem as an example of the dangers that this would bring with it.

After expressing its alarm at the process of liberation which is embracing more and more countries, it refers with its characteristic racist distaste to "the black majority of the Republic of South Africa and Rhodesia, a majority whose existence prevails, without doubt, because in those countries methods of segregation as drastic and expeditious as the massacre of whole tribes have not been applied." After long paragraphs in defence of the policy of apartheid, it laments the wall that has been raised against relations "with a country and a people which, by virtue of its having become one of the most advanced nations on earth in terms of material, technical, scientific, spiritual and cultural achievement, raises itself as the only bastion of Civilisation in the convulsed and marxist overrun African continent."

And the dictatorship's mouthpiece concludes with an aggressive appeal:

> "Do not support the measures of isolation and compulsion, such as the arms embargo, which are aimed at undermining the defensive potential of one of the most courageous pro-Western and anti-communist outposts, which is situated precisely where the aggressive forces of red imperialism are concentrating their efforts." (EP 4.4.77).

Systematic Campaign

This is not an isolated case, but an example of a systematic campaign which is intent on publishing the most violent and baseless propaganda to compare with the most iniquitous racist slander. And against this background, every now and then Rear-Admiral Hugo Marquez, Commander in Chief of the Uruguayan Navy appears, urging the formation of SATO. On November 20, 1976, speaking in the city of Fray Bentos, he declared that the strategic changes which are taking place in the world spell out the fact that there must be a closer relationship between navies, and that the Latin American navies "must not act separately."

In reference to SATO, he added that he couldn't say when it would be formed, "although we are undoubtedly going to come to it." (EP 21.11.76) The Uruguayan naval chief specified that coordination was necessary "to confront other nations", and pointed out the strategic importance of the South Atlantic. The infallible *El Pais* immediately followed him, with an article "SATO, an imperative which cannot be postponed" and declared that:

> "The installation of Soviet bases in Angola, the unpredictable future of South Africa, and the disquieting presence, which is ever-increasing, of Soviet battleships in the waters of the Indian Ocean, have motivated the countries of this part of America to think seriously of organising in joint defence, by emulating the organisation of the North Atlantic . . .
>
> "Only the United States would be capable of joining with the countries of these latitudes in making up a homogeneous international system. This homogeneity would be found in those states which belong to the same type and obey the same political conceptions."

And the leader adds that "it would be counter-productive . . . to ignore the value of South Africa in this regional organisation. Its excellent geopolitical situation, its impressive military potential, and the similarity of principles with those of our region make it eminently suitable as an ally of the future SATO".

In view of the problems existing between Brazil and Argentina with relation to the proposal, the newspaper decisively opts for Brazilian supremacy:

> "In respect of the rivalry between Brazil and Argentina, one fact needs to be taken into account: in this day and age Brazil constitutes the second-ranking power of America: this has been recognised by Europe and the United States itself, although it may be hard for Carter to admit it . . . Argentina, totally involved in controlling its internal political situation, can do no less than recognise this international reality. To oppose it would be absurd."

And it stresses finally that the US is paying ever-increasing attention to the South Atlantic.

More recently, shortly after anti-Soviet provocation using the excuse of fishing in the southern seas (in which the naval representative of the Argentine military Junta, Admiral Massera, played an important role) the ANSA agency published statements attributed to the Argentine Foreign Minister, Admiral Oscar Montes, which updated the debate about the creation of SATO. The Argentine Foreign Office "categorically" denied the existence of "supposed agreements" between Argentina, other countries of Latin America's Southern Cone and South Africa concerning a pact for the defence of the southern Atlantic. But it was very significant internationally, that on the same day as this denial, the Uruguayan naval chief, Rear-Admiral Marquez, once again brought up the issue of the necessity of a southern naval alliance in America "to keep better watch over the Southern Atlantic's 200-mile zone" (*La Nacion,* Buenos Aires, 5.10.77).

Apart from this, the Argentine Foreign Office's document did not detract from all of the statements of Minister Montes, especially those which recognised the existence of conversations with the South African government with a view to the "defence" of the southern Atlantic, and which confirmed that if there had not been "concrete steps" towards the alliance in question, there were "good intentions towards it".

The idea stems from the early fifties with the US strategy of a world system of blocs and military bases. The plan was drawn up by the Pentagon and it was outlined in 1957 by General Sheppard at a meeting with the Chiefs of Staff of some Southern Cone countries of Latin America. When the plans of the Yankee militarists were published, they were strongly condemned by the democratic forces. The conference of the Communist Parties of Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Paraguay and Uruguay which took place the same year, published a significant warning about the dangers of the plan.

In 1956, at Washington's instigation, a naval committee involving Brazil, Argentina, Paraguay and Uruguay had already been set up. Its purpose was to stage joint naval manoeuvres under the direction of the US. This continued until 1960 when this coordination became more elaborate under aegis of the operative command of the US

Navy in the Southern Atlantic. The 'Unitas' manoeuvres take place every year and since 1962 have included liaison officers from countries with an interest in the southern Atlantic, particularly South Africa, which has recently become incorporated more openly into the joint operations.

In the 'Unitas XVII' manoeuvres in 1976, the united air and naval forces of Chile, Uruguay, Brazil and Argentina took part in cooperation with the navy and air force of the US, and included a North American atomic submarine. A high ranking representative from the S. African Navy was present in these exercises which, as was declared in a press conference by Rear-Admiral Sagerholm, were preceded by a clarification of the forms of "joint guarantee of stability in the Southern Atlantic."

Effectively, whilst Kissinger was preparing his journey to Africa, aimed towards a diplomatic offensive in the continent, the North American military was organising a series of conferences in Buenos Aires (cf *Le Monde Diplomatique,* 10.76). Officially, these meetings were held to study the security problem in the southern Atlantic, the tightening of coordination of naval policies in Brazil and Argentina (the Brazilian Naval Minister, Azevedo Henning, and the commander of the Argentine Navy, Emilio Massera, were present) as well as the preparation for the next "Unitas-XVII" manoeuvres. The Commander of the US Navy, Elllis, and his designated successor, Sagerholm, presented an ambitious plan aimed at the creation of a naval striking force (force de frappe) under a unified strategic command, which would have its own airforce and bases.

Since then, a virulent press campaign has started in the southern cone countries to create a smoke-screen about the "threat" created by the "marxist governments of Angola and Mozambique", linked to the "Cuban threat" and the alleged "Soviet presence" in the southern Atlantic. Several examples worth pointing out are: the Argentine daily *Clarin* (27.11.76) published a lengthy commentary developing "from the idea of a military defence treaty for the Southern Atlantic put forward by the Uruguayan Rear-Admiral Hugo Marquez." (ANSA, 28.11.76.) According to *La Razon,* also from Buenos Aires, the analysis of the treaty had reached the point of considering "as eventual potential signatories not only the coastal countries of the South Atlantic, but also other countries of the western world with significant interests in the lines of maritime communication". And it added that the example supplied by authorative sources" was that of Chile, "whose important interests in the Southern Atlantic were an undeniable truth."

In Brazil, although the Foreign Minister Antonio de Silveira had stated that his country would not take part in a southern Atlantic military alliance, the naval minister, Admiral Azevedo Henning repeated his opinions concerning the modernisation of the national navy to fulfil a continental mission which, by virtue of its length of coastline, possessed a strategic importance in the southern Atlantic. Amidst these contradictions, the influential *Jornal do Brasil* expressed (in similar terms to those used by *La Nacion* of Buenos Aires) its favourable feelings towards a revision of the question "in the light of the new factors which fundamentally alter the military situation in the area" and declared itself in favour of the creation of a southern pact in the mould of NATO. *O Estado de Sao Paolo* for its part, stated in a leading article that the creation of an inter-American military force which would guarantee a western presence in the south Atlantic was under review in several countries.

Shortly afterwards, whilst the change of government in the US seemed to impose a halt, the daily *Ultima Hora* revealed that Brazil's intelligence services were examining in great secrecy the possible incorporation of the country within the military alliance in the southern Atlantic. The Brazilian foreign ministry repeated its stand against participation with SA and SATO and did not hide that this was for reasons of its commercial interests south of the Sahara.

But it definitely seems clear that beyond those circumstance linked to Brazil's economic constraints, and the disagreement between the army and navy of Latin America's largest country, SATO has not disappeared — nor can it disappear — from the long-term plans of the Brazilian dictatorship. On the contrary, it is an undeniable consequence of the geopolitical doctrines which officially direct the expansionism of Brazilian fascists the principal exponent of whom General (retired) Golbery do Couto e Silva — considered to be the second most important figure of the regime — has declared that the southern Atlantic is destined to be a "mare nostrum" for Brazil.

Alarm in South Africa

In addition, SATO also has great significance for South Africa. At the beginning of the 1960's, the government in Pretoria began to practise an active foreign policy, spurred by the fear of the growth of the African emancipation movement illustrated by the appearance of successive independent states, and also by the desire to conquer new markets for its growing production.

"The terror in face of the danger that the wave of liberation could cross the South African borders," writes Arkaki Butliski, "kept the racists in a state of permanent alarm" and it is in this framework that the idea of SATO gains force. (cf *Problems of the Contemporary World: Against racism,* II, Moscow, 1971). Around that time the inclusion of Portugal in the pact, and through this a link with NATO was planned. People in struggle, both in Portugal and its former African colonies, destroyed these intentions. And this in turn made the intentions of the South African racists still weaker, once Mozambique and Angola were liberated, since the struggle of the black people took on new force within the frontiers of SA.

The decisive factor finally, in the field of imperialism and its subordinates, is the position of the USA. Now, as a result of changes in the world's balance of power, and in particular, the advances of the liberation forces in Africa, the former plans of the Pentagon will not easily be achieved. However, this is far from implying that they will be abandoned. In giving the alternatives that Washington is now facing in this new situation, *Le Monde Diplomatique* points out as one of the possible options, a military alliance which would join South Africa with the Southern Cone countries of Latin America, without official participation of the US. (*LMD*, 3.77).

Diverse North American publications — including *Business Week, Poder Naval* and *Latin America* — coincide in re-stating the importance that the question of the SATO holds in Washington. According to *Poder Naval*, the strategic importance for the US of Zairian copper, manganese from Gabon, chrome from South Africa and all types of products from the southern countries of the western hemisphere, makes the maintenance of US interests in the southern Atlantic indispensable.

As for the contradictions in and concerning Brazil, the same magazine recalls that US capital controls more than 60 per cent of the basic sectors of the Brazilian economy. It must be noted that the investments, loans and diverse forms of spoliation that Yankee capital is engaged in in the southern cone countries of Latin America "are the major economic pillar and the major source of enrichment of the US monopolies in this continent" *(La Vie Internationale,* Moscow, 9.77).

To this can be added the political and military objectives of the most regressive circles of Yankee imperialism. It is easily understandable that the magazine *Defence and Foreign Affairs* which is very close to the Pentagon, underlines that SATO "is a North American interest."

* * *

The Latin American fascists claim that the third world war is developing and it is taking the form of the struggle against "marxist subversion". In waving this Hitlerian banner, they are seeking the formation of blocs to prevent their international isolation, and at the same time, in the name of "internal security" they try to justify their campaign of terror towards the peoples of the countries where they hold sway. For this reason they are in favour of SATO.

NOTE

1 The Dept of Research into Peace and Conflict of the University of Uppsala (Sweden) has produced a documented work about the plan to export apartheid to Latin America. This plan, which has already become reality in the case of Bolivia, is supported by circles within the imperialist countries of the USA, GFR, GB and Holland, either directly or through the World Bank, the International Development Bank, and other financial agencies. This is taken from the aforementioned study, one of the conclusions of which is the following: "It is not possible to dismiss the links between these migratory plans and those plans referring to a treaty in the south Atlantic of obvious strategic and military importance." (Extracts from the document are published by *New Perspectives,* the magazine of the World Council for Peace, No 6/77)

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

THE 1946 MINERS' STRIKE

From Dan O'Meara, Dept. of History, University of Dar es Salaam:

In his recent review of the book *South Africa After Soweto (The African Communist* No. 72), Comrade Toussaint listed a series of "value judgements" the authors of this book make about the ANC and CP. He ascribes such "value judgements" to a number of "tainted sources", which are described as "a polyglot assemblage of Trotskyists, ultra-left splinter sects, dissident and expelled ex-Communists and ex-ANC men". To this group of "tainted sources" of these value judgements, are counterposed the "acceptable and reputable" sources of "fact, of statistics and of record".

As Comrade Toussaint has included an article of mine on the 1946 Mineworkers' Strike in his list of "tainted sources", I should like to correct him precisely on a number of points of "fact and record".

Firstly, on the four occasions on which my article is cited by Callinicos and Rogers, it is referred to *solely and exclusively* for *statistical* evidence — on the increasing size of the industrial

proletariat in the '30's and '40's; on strike activity by African workers during the war; on the membership of African trade unions; and on the wages paid to African miners 1890-1942.

Secondly, even leaving aside the fact that the opposition between "value judgements" and "facts" is a distinction of bourgeois sociology and has no place in Marxist theory, *none* of these co-called value-judgements listed by Comrade Toussaint appear in my article. On the contrary, the argument in that article is in direct opposition to that of Callinicos and Rogers, as I have premised my analysis of the liberation movement on the concept of class alliance — a notion which is totally absent from Callinicos and Rogers' crude, mechanistic dogma.

Thirdly, as a member of the ANC, I do not and have never belonged to, or associated with the groups in the "polyglot assemblage" listed by Comrade Toussaint.

As Comrade Toussaint has clearly not read my article, I am at a loss to see why, as a source of "fact, of statistics and of record", it is grouped with the "tainted" rather than the " acceptable and reputable" sources. This unfounded smear has understandably caused me severe political embarrassment.

(Toussaint replies: I referred to "a polyglot collection" of sources — mainly Trotskyist and dissident — on which the authors relied for their disparaging treatment of the ANC and the South African Communist Party. In that collection I mistakenly included an article by D. O'Meara published in the *Journal of Commonwealth and Comparative Studies*. My sincere apologies to O'Meara. My intention was to cast doubts on the acceptability of the *Journal* as a reliable witness to the politics of the South African liberation movement, doubts which I still have. I did not intend to cast aspersions on O'Meara.

The passage in question was dealing with the somewhat suspect nature of the extremely small type references in footnotes to the book. Since realising my mistake in including O'Meara in my list, I have looked again, more carefully, at the reference which gave rise to that error. It is on page 50 of the book; it asserts that the African miners in 1946 voted for strike action "against their leaders' pleas". The footnote reference for this allegation is so obscurely worded that

I took it to be derived from O'Meara's article. I have not read O'Meara's article, and regret that I was misled into thinking that he was the source of this allegation.

That being said, let me take the opportunity to express my disagreement with any suggestion that the leaders of the African miners were opposed to or fearful of a strike. I was on the spot and associated with the African Mine Workers' Union campaign at the time. The facts are that the strike proposal was made, voted on and approved at a mass meeting of miners held in a public square in the centre of Johannesburg in the presence of a considerable body of police, uniformed and Special Branch. A War Measure, still in force at that time, held heavy penalties for anyone encouraging or inciting a strike. The leaders of the Union decided — I think correctly — not to offer themselves up for martyrdom, but to allow the strike decision to come up naturally from the rank and file miners themselves — as it did. The leaders neither 'encouraged' nor 'incited'. But the result was in fact exactly what they had hoped for, and worked for clandestinely in advance.

I hope that this not only puts the historical record straight but also reinforces my apology to O'Meara for my sense of outrage at the slur

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